

STRONG

FITNESS
MAGAZINE

**SCULPT
& SHRED**

**STRONG SHOULDERS,
RIPPED ABS, LEAN LEGS**
THE HIGH-INTENSITY WORKOUT
THAT GETS IT ALL DONE

**COFFEE
ADDICT?**

**QUIT WITH FOODS
THAT BOOST ENERGY**

**START SPRING
TRAINING NOW**
**OLYMPIC
MEDALIST**
**TESSA
VIRTUE**

**HOW THIS FIERCE
FIGURE SKATER
TRAINS TO BE ELITE**

**SHAKE
OFF
STRESS**
7 WAYS TO FEEL
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SQUAT**

**WHAT YOU SHOULD BE
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BCAAs – BACKED BY SCIENCE, & HIGHLY EFFECTIVE & DELICIOUS!

“Are BCAAs the Best Supplement you can take?”

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Caloric restriction, limiting carbs, increased cardio intensity; all essential for effective dieting, and all rapid ways to breakdown and flush away muscle. The muscle tissue breakdown that takes place when you're dieting reduces your metabolism and your ability to burn calories. Taking AMINOCORE feeds your muscles directly even while dieting and dramatically limits muscle deterioration. The net effect; you retain muscle, melt fat and maintain a higher metabolism. AMINOCORE the dieting secret you've been looking for.

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AMINOCORE has Myotrisol™; a cutting-edge solubility technology to BCAA dosage administration. Until now, delivery of a 100% pure 45:30:25 ratio BCAA powder in a potent research directed level (8,180 mg), ideal for ANABOLIC activity, was next to impossible. Aside from being the purest Pharmaceutical-Grade BCAAs, our Myotrisol™ process FLASH-FREEZE-DRIES our 45:30:25 BCAA powder to create a truly soluble and easily-mixed BCAA drink that absorbs in a truly liquid form.

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ALL BCAAs ARE NOT CREATED EQUAL!

When you're comparing one BCAA to the other, look closely at the formula – does it include glutamine passed off as real BCAAs? In contrast, the AMINOCORE label shows you precise BCAA amounts. Glutamine has its place, but it is not a Branched Chain Amino Acid (BCAA). AMINOCORE includes 8,180 mg of real BCAAs not glutamine. AMINOCORE is 100% PURE, FERMENTATION-DERIVED, PHARMACEUTICAL-GRADE, 45:30:25 ratio BCAAs. With added Ketoisocaproic

acid (KIC) to further enhance the buffering of lactic acid (muscle toxin) and increase the levels of L-Leucine at the site of muscle. AMINOCORE contains additional highly bioavailable B-Vitamins not only enhance the anabolic environment, they help to release additional metabolic energy.

THE BOTTOM LINE!

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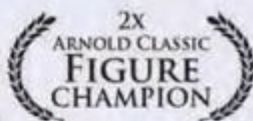


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0g
Sugar

8g
BCAAs

0g
Carbs



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MARCH/APRIL 2015

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Three-time Olympic medalist Tessa Virtue is finding out how strong she really is. Plus: How she trains to stay elite.

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Get the workout that melts fat and builds muscle. No cardio required.

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HAIR & MAKEUP TWO CHICKS
& SOME LIPSTICK
WARDROBE MODEL'S OWN



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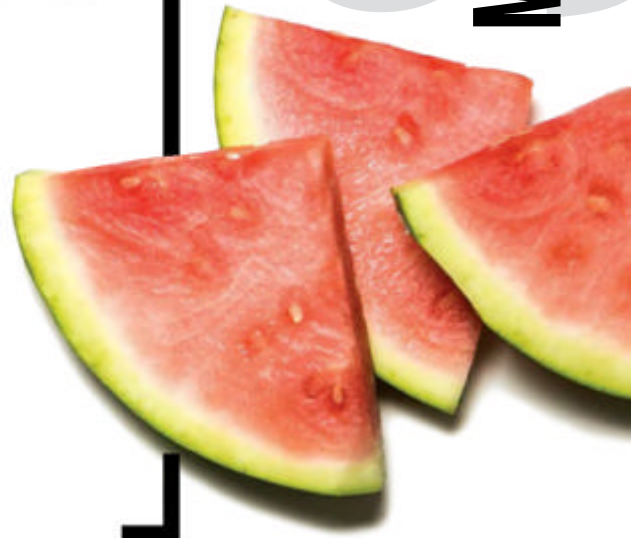
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Four real women we couldn't help but notice.

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GET STRONGER

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MEET THE NEW Tessa

Smart, modest, and oh so stunning, we've fallen for our latest cover athlete—and you will too. Triple Olympic medalist Tessa Virtue talks competing, training, and what it means to be a strong woman.



SPRING THAW

April showers giving you the chills? Warm up with a kick-ass bowl of homemade soup or chili.

BONUS: *These recipes are lean and protein-packed so they'll warm you up, not fill you out.*

TRAIN HARD, STAY HOME

Get stronger arms, tighter glutes, and a leaner bod without leaving home. This is the ultimate living room workout.

STRESS LESS From calming foods to chill-out techniques, we've got expert tips for beating the burden of stress.

TRX 101 Curious about suspension training? Don't be intimidated, get educated. Visit strongfitnessmag.com and we'll show you the ropes.



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MARIA MOUNTAIN, MSC, CSCS

Pursuit of Power, pg 38

Maria Mountain is a fitness coach and the owner of Revolution Conditioning in London, Ontario, where she trains some of Canada's top athletes, including hockey players and figure skaters (like our cover athlete, Olympic medalist, Tessa Virtue). For this issue, Maria pulled together a knockout agility and conditioning routine to help athletes tackle their sports with more power: *"I created it for Tessa to reinforce proper movement mechanics on the ice and to target the muscles she needs when she performs,"* says Maria, who has been coaching for 15 years. Although Maria is known for her tailored approach to sport-specific training, she's quick to point out that you don't have to be a skater to get the benefits of this functional workout. It builds endurance, power, and recruits the muscles that we usually tend to neglect.



BRENDAN BRAZIER,
VEGAN ATHLETE AND AUTHOR
Expert Source, "Energy Upgrade," pg 74

Brendan is a former professional Ironman triathlete and a two-time Ultra Marathon Champion, but you may know him best as the creator of vegan nutritional supplements VEGA, and bestselling author of the *Thrive* series.



AMANDA KOTEL, BSC, CPT
"You Don't Know Squat," pg 70

A personal trainer with a specialization in athletic therapy and a degree in exercise science, Amanda's expertise goes beyond just knowing how to build a body that looks good. Her passion lies in biomechanics and strength building, as well as exercise rehab. In other words, her routines are guaranteed to improve your fitness.



KELLY NICKEL, BOOTCAMP TRAINER
"Own It," pg 26

She's a busy mom of four, the owner of Kelly Nickel Fitness Adventures, and a program director for Fresno Bootcamp in California. In 2011, she was awarded the Best of Fresno award for Best Fitness Trainer and is known in her community as a go-to source for fitness inspiration and ideas.



LINDA MELONE, FREELANCE WRITER
"Super Bowls," pg 48

If you're a long-time reader of health and fitness mags, chances are you've come across something penned by California-based health and fitness writer, Linda Melone. Her work has appeared in some of the industry's top publications, as well as online resources such as WebMD.



LINDSAY KENT,
CERTIFIED PERSONAL TRAINER
"Chain Reaction," pg 56

Lindsay is a Master Trainer with the ISSA and is the owner of her own personal training business, Equilibrium Bodylab. She's also a professor for the ISSA's College of Exercise Science, and former AAU Junior Olympic volleyball captain, as well as a regular article contributor for fitness publications and websites.



KASIA WIND, FREELANCE WRITER
"Brain Dump," pg 64

Freelance writer Kasia prefers to tackle health-based articles such as psychology, nutrition and lifestyle, so she can gain knowledge while delving into her research. Her work has appeared in several notable fitness magazines and in national PR campaigns.

ALL PROTEIN
POWDER HAS A SHELF
LIFE; CHECK FOR
EXPIRATION DATES.



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and supplement study analysis.

Tips & More From Our Panel of Experts



EMILY BAKER, RD, CSD

SPORTS DIETITIAN; NUTRITION CONSULTANT;
NUTRITION COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER,
WASHINGTON, DC

You Asked:

**“How serious is the
expiration date on
my whey powder?”**

Answer: Most whey proteins have a shelf life of 18 months to 2 years, and consuming your protein well past the expiration date may cause gastrointestinal discomfort and stomach issues. Although bacterial growth is rare, with lack of moisture and proper storage, some protein powders contain flavor or coloring that start to break down over time. Also, if any fat is present in the formula it can start to go rancid.

The best way to keep your protein powder fresh and prevent any possible denaturing is to store in a cool, dry place in an airtight container that doesn't allow light to get in; ceramic coffee and flour canisters work great for this! Also do not expose your stored protein powder to your saliva by using any utensils you have placed in your mouth in the container.

EXPERT ADVICE

you SAID IT

We want to hear what you have to say!

Email us your thoughts on how we're doing at yousaidit@strongfitnessmag.com. Are you digging the content and loving the workouts? Do you have a success story to share? What does being STRONG mean to you? Community and feedback is important to us and we want to know what's on your mind.

THE DEBATE CONTINUES...

Valarie, via Facebook

In response to the comment in the last issue about the paper quality: I love it! Anyone who needs a page to stay open can crease the page and work around it. Don't change it!

Jennifer, via Facebook

Don't change a thing about the feel of your magazine! The thickness of the paper definitely makes it more high-end and separates you from your competitors. I toss regular magazines after reading, but I'll keep yours.

READER APPROVED

Marisela, via Facebook

"Loved the killer workouts in the Jan/Feb issue, especially Nicole Wilkins's lower body circuit. And oh my goodness! The chocolate peanut butter smoothie is delicious!"

NOT NAMING NAMES

Jen, via email

I've been a subscriber to another fitness magazine for over a decade but frankly, it's been disappointing. In your magazine I have once again found inspiration that I've been missing, sans "fluff."

Cassie, via Instagram

I love that you feature athletes with various amounts of muscle. I was so sick of all the other women's mags that only use Bikini athletes on their covers.

IS OUR
PAPER TOO
THICK? TELL
US WHAT
YOU THINK!



NO PHOTOSHOP HERE!

I absolutely love the woman (Ashley Horner) featured in the Nov/Dec issue in the article "**Kicking Ass and Making Gains.**" I love that her stretch marks were not photoshopped out. I have almost the same marks and to see a magazine embrace them along with her incredible accomplishments is refreshing. It's something I have insecurities about, and seeing that made my week.

- Catherine, via Facebook

Thanks Catherine! We loved your letter so much, we're sending you a STRONG tank top!



The New Skinny

STRONG has changed my perception of what I want to look like, which before was just thin or skinny, probably to an extent where it wasn't healthy. Now I want to be healthy and strong.

-Bay, via email

I love that this magazine teaches women how to really work out for results, rather than scaring them into thinking that if they lift more than 5 lbs, they'll turn into body builders.

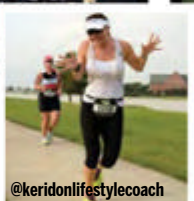
-Maria, via email



@doodleturtle
photo by Studio Llotus



@fitmedicine

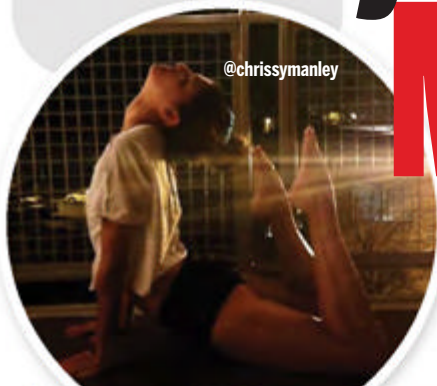


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POSTS WE LOVE!

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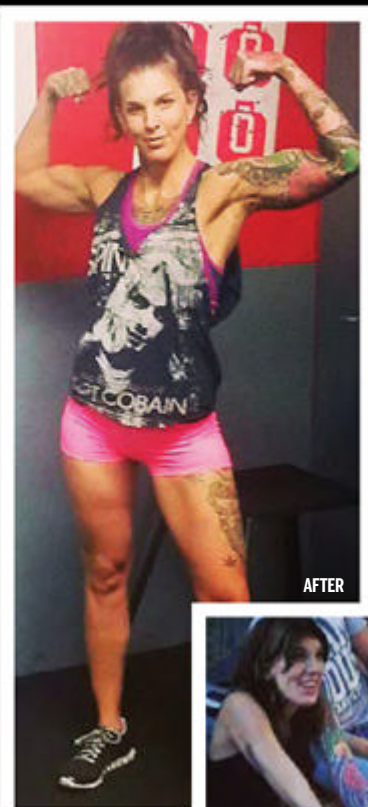
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AFTER



BEFORE

OUR FAVORITE MOMENT

RENADA CRAWSHAW FORT MCMURRAY, ALBERTA

Renada wasn't always the picture of health she is today. From ages 26 to 28, while living in Los Angeles, she was heavily into the party scene. Drinking and smoking were staples in her daily life, and she was headed down a difficult path. In 2010, she got a call from her dad, and the news wasn't good. "My father was diagnosed with cancer," recalls Renada, now 32, "so I moved back home to be with him. A month later he passed away." The next six months were hard for Renada, who describes life as one big blur back then. She continued to abuse alcohol to cope with her grief and lost herself. "Finally, one day I woke up and thought, 'My dad would not be happy about this.' So I made the decision to change." She stopped drinking, quit smoking and embraced a healthy diet and exercise. Eventually she extended her new found passion to others by becoming a personal trainer, and is currently working towards a certification in nutrition. This summer, she'll also be competing in fitness and in powerlifting. "Fitness has literally both saved, as well as changed my life, and I wouldn't have it any other way."

Thank you for inspiring us with your fiercest moments in health and fitness. You are proof that our readers are **STRONG**. Keep posting your pics with the hashtag **#mystrongmoment**

FITNESS TO FIGURE SKATING



THEY SAY THERE'S A FIRST TIME FOR EVERYTHING. And if you've been a reader of STRONG for a while now, then you've probably noticed that this issue marks a first time for us. I'm referring to our cover, which, until now, has consistently featured women from within the fitness industry. Every single one of them has been a fitness model or competitor at some stage in her career, or has made a name for herself strictly because she's in impeccable shape.

Tessa Virtue doesn't fall into that category; she's a 25-year-old Olympic ice dancer who has known little more than the world of skating for the last 17 years. She's highly competitive (she owns three Olympic medals), incredibly focused, and undeniably fit. And while she may not lift as heavy or as often as the athletes that have graced our covers before her, being dedicated to fitness is integral to her sport—how do you get through a four-and-a-half-minute Olympic skate without it?

But when you read her interview on page 38, you'll find there's more to Tessa Virtue than dancing on skates in glittery costumes. Currently working towards a degree in psychology, she is thoughtful, well spoken, and very self-aware. She isn't afraid to have a voice, and speaks up about the challenges and expectations that come with elite-level sports. And now, taking a pause from competing to experience life as an individual, she's embracing who she is, and is confident in the woman she has become.

Tessa is the perfect fit for STRONG because she embodies the very word while at the same time, redefining it. And that happens to be exactly what we set out to do when we created this magazine. Our vision is to showcase women of different body types, from various walks of life, who push the boundaries of what they've been told is the ideal weight or shape. It is our mission to empower women to build muscles if they want them, run across the country if they feel like it, get in a ring, on a stage, on a track, or on the ice, if it compels them. Strength means something different to everyone, and we intend to celebrate each and every definition.

So whether you've been a reader since the beginning, or you've just recently discovered us, we hope that our message resonates with you, and that you'll find inspiration to achieve your goals within our pages. If you're just picking us up for the first time, welcome to STRONG. This is one book you can judge by its cover.

**STAY STRONG,
KIRSTYN BROWN
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

**BELOW: FOR A BIG DOSE
OF INSPIRATION, TURN
TO PAGE 82 TO READ
CHRISTINA LEE'S STORY
OF HER 3,000 MILE CROSS-
COUNTRY JOURNEY.**

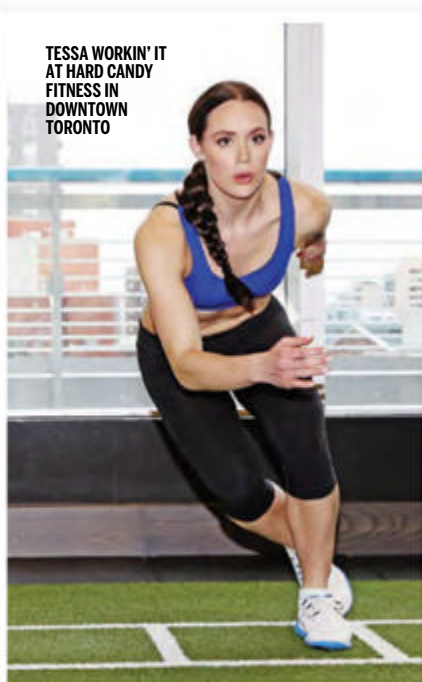
**BOTTOM PHOTO: MAKE-UP
ARTIST LORI FABRIZIO PUTS
FINAL TOUCHES ON TESSA.**



**MODEL
BUNNY
AZZOPARDI
STRIKING AN
ATLAS POSE**



**TESSA WORKIN' IT
AT HARD CANDY
FITNESS IN
DOWNTOWN
TORONTO**



**LEFT:
THE ART TEAM
SETS THE SCENE
FOR THE SOUP
FEATURE ON
PAGE 48**



**THE SFM CREW
ON SET WITH
TESSA VIRTUE**



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Always consult your physician before beginning any exercise program. This general information is not intended to diagnose any medical condition or to replace your healthcare professional. Consult with your healthcare professional to design an appropriate exercise prescription. If you experience any pain or difficulty with these exercises, stop and consult your healthcare provider. If you experience any symptoms of weakness, unsteadiness, light-headedness or dizziness, chest pain or pressure, nausea, or shortness of breath. Mild soreness after exercise may be experienced after beginning a new exercise. Contact your physician if the soreness does not improve after 2-3 days.

LEAN BODY For Her

Photo by: Joseph Lindstrom



Jamie Eason

Jamie Eason
Fitness Icon
Team Labrada

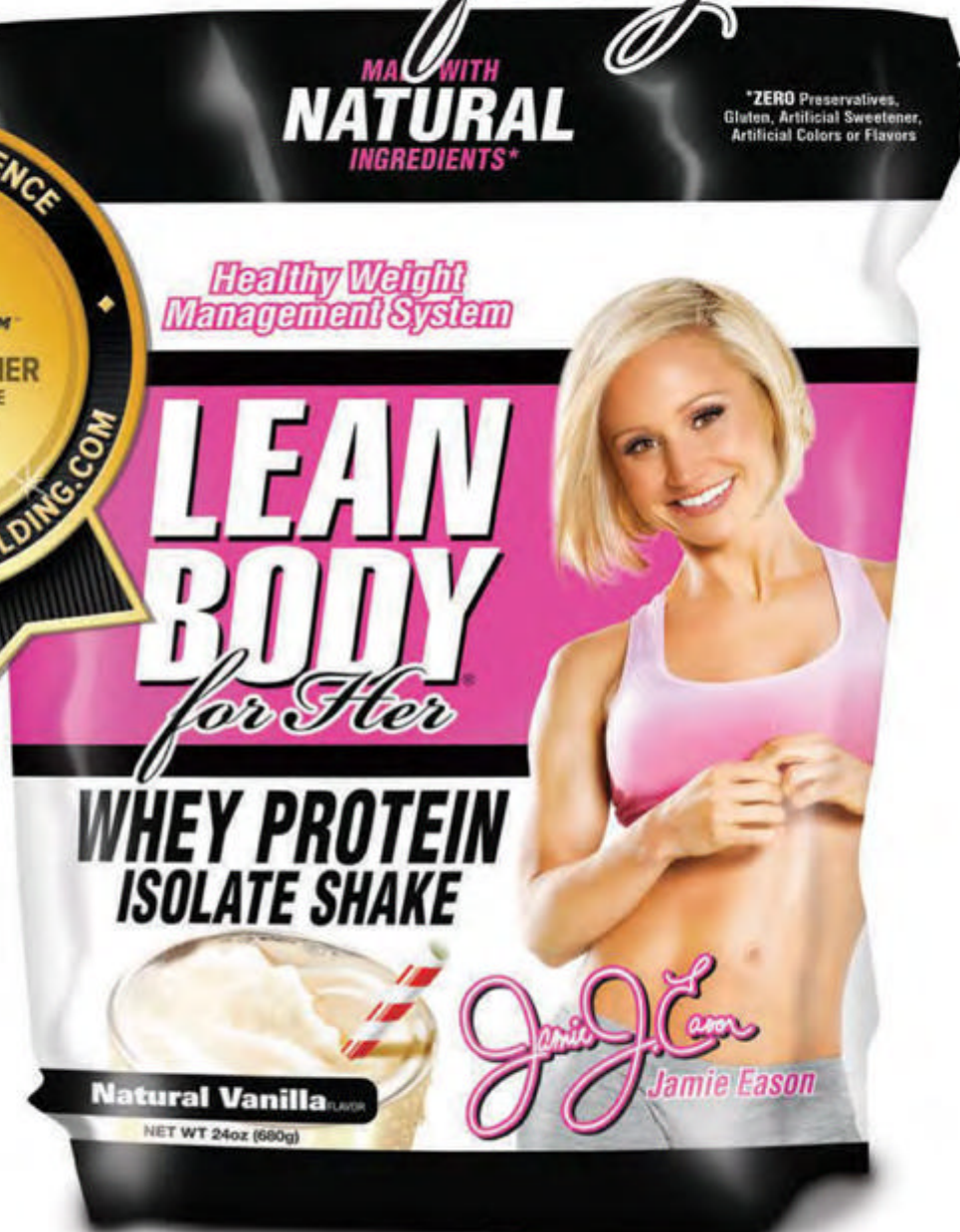
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I am so proud of my partnership with Labrada! Being with a company that puts the customer first and truly cares is a great feeling!”



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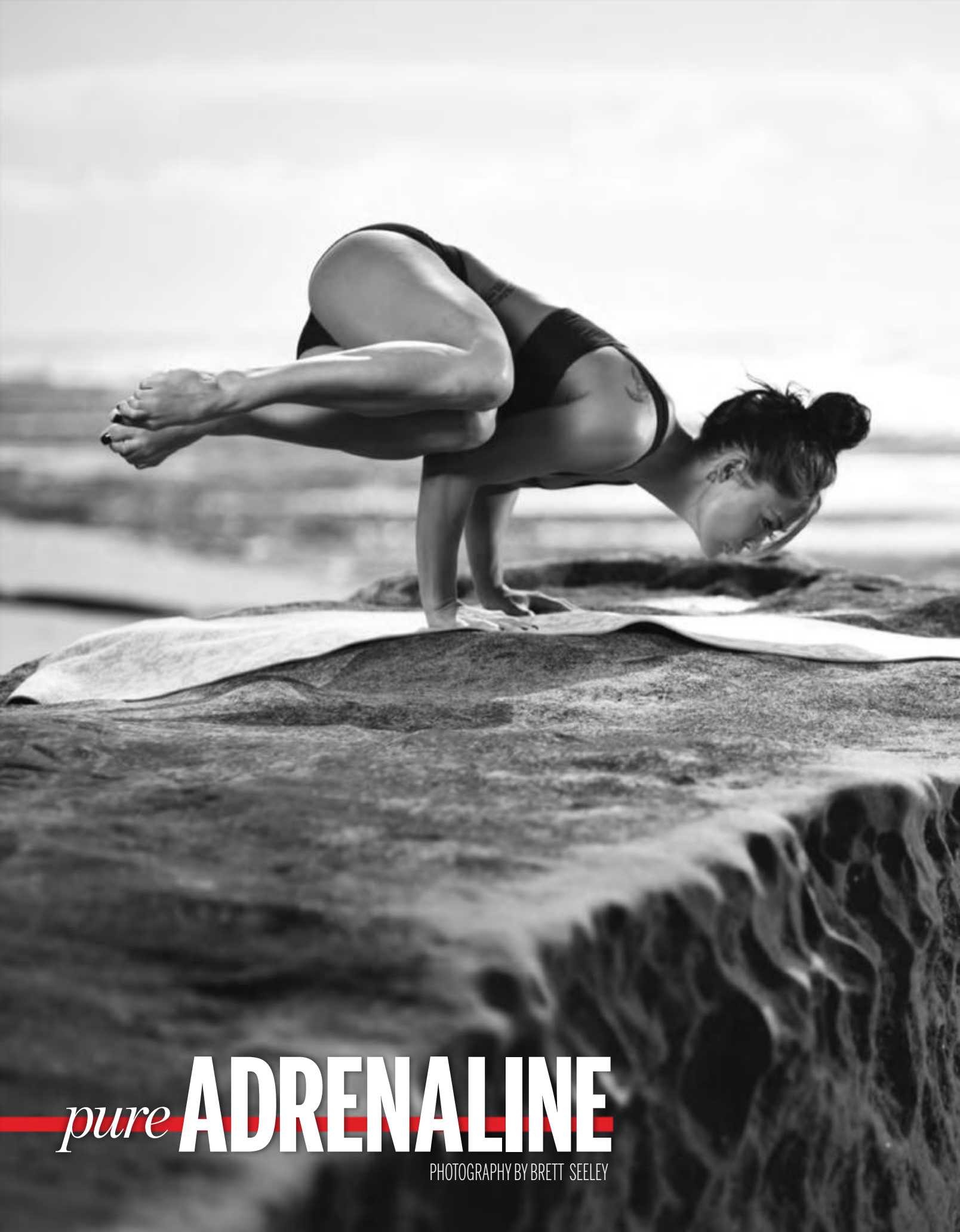
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pure **ADRENALINE**

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*In the midst of
movement and chaos,
keep stillness
inside of you.*

-DEEPAK CHOPRA

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Angelike's philosophy and the Lady Boss™ program have been featured on NBC, ABC, OWN, FOX, and CBS.
2007 World Silver Medalist, WMA Champion, 2003 Model Fitness Champion, 2005 Miss Teen America, (Fitness coach model is not the same as the model in the cover image)

the CIRCUI

USEFUL NEWS,
TIPS AND FACTS
FROM THE HEALTH
AND FITNESS WORLD.

•fitness •health •fuel •supplements •fitness •health •fuel •supplements •fitness •health •fuel •supplements •fitness •h •fuel

BLOW OFF STEAM

Your vitamins may need to relocate. Experts say that storing them in highly humid areas like bathrooms and kitchens could be stripping your supplements of their benefits. Pills and vitamins are vulnerable to a process called deliquescence, in which humidity (from say, showers, blow drying and cooking) causes a water-soluble solid to dissolve. Storing vitamins and supplements in airtight containers and in heat-neutral areas of your home will help keep them dry and effective.





BEST IN SHOULDERS

A study by the American Council on Exercise analyzed a variety of exercises to determine the best ones for shoulders. Some of their top moves included:

DB Shoulder Press

DB Front Raise

Battle Ropes

BB Upright Row

Incline Row

Push-Ups

Dips

FLIP TO
PAGE 78 FOR
A MOVE THAT
TARGETS YOUR
DELTS!

GO THE DISTANCE

Want an antioxidant boost? Train for endurance. A study published in *AGE: The Journal of the American Aging Association*, found that a single 45-minute endurance workout could boost your antioxidant system, especially if you're between the ages of 18-25. In the study, participants rode a stationary bike for 45 minutes at an intense level, then underwent tests that produced oxidative stress the following day. Researchers found that the younger exercisers showed an improved response to oxidative stress than those that were over 50.

43

PERCENTAGE BY WHICH ENGAGING IN AT LEAST **SIX HOURS OF MODERATE EXERCISE PER WEEK CAN REDUCE YOUR RISK FOR DEVELOPING PARKINSON'S DISEASE**, ACCORDING TO A 12-YEAR STUDY PUBLISHED IN *BRAIN: A JOURNAL OF NEUROLOGY*.

AIM FOR 30

The fitter you are, the better your chances of fending off hypertension by at least 20 percent, according to a study involving 57,000 participants—the largest of its kind—published in the *Journal of the American Heart Association*. Those who fared well in the testing were less susceptible to

developing blood pressure issues, after a fitness test that included steady state activity, like bike riding, for 30 minutes or more. Although the study didn't suggest that it was bike riding to praise for the positive results, experts did note that any activity sustained for 30 minutes or more had the best effects on blood pressure overall.

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Grain Fed

Followers of the Paleo Diet may want to pay attention:

A recent study published online by *JAMA Internal Medicine* assessed 26,920 deaths to reveal that eating more whole grains could be linked to a longer lifespan, and especially reducing deaths related to cardiovascular disease (CVD). Of all the factors considered in the study, including body mass index, smoking, and age, researchers found those who consumed whole grains lived longer overall. Researchers estimated that a daily dose of 28 grams of whole grains was linked with a five percent boost to mortality.

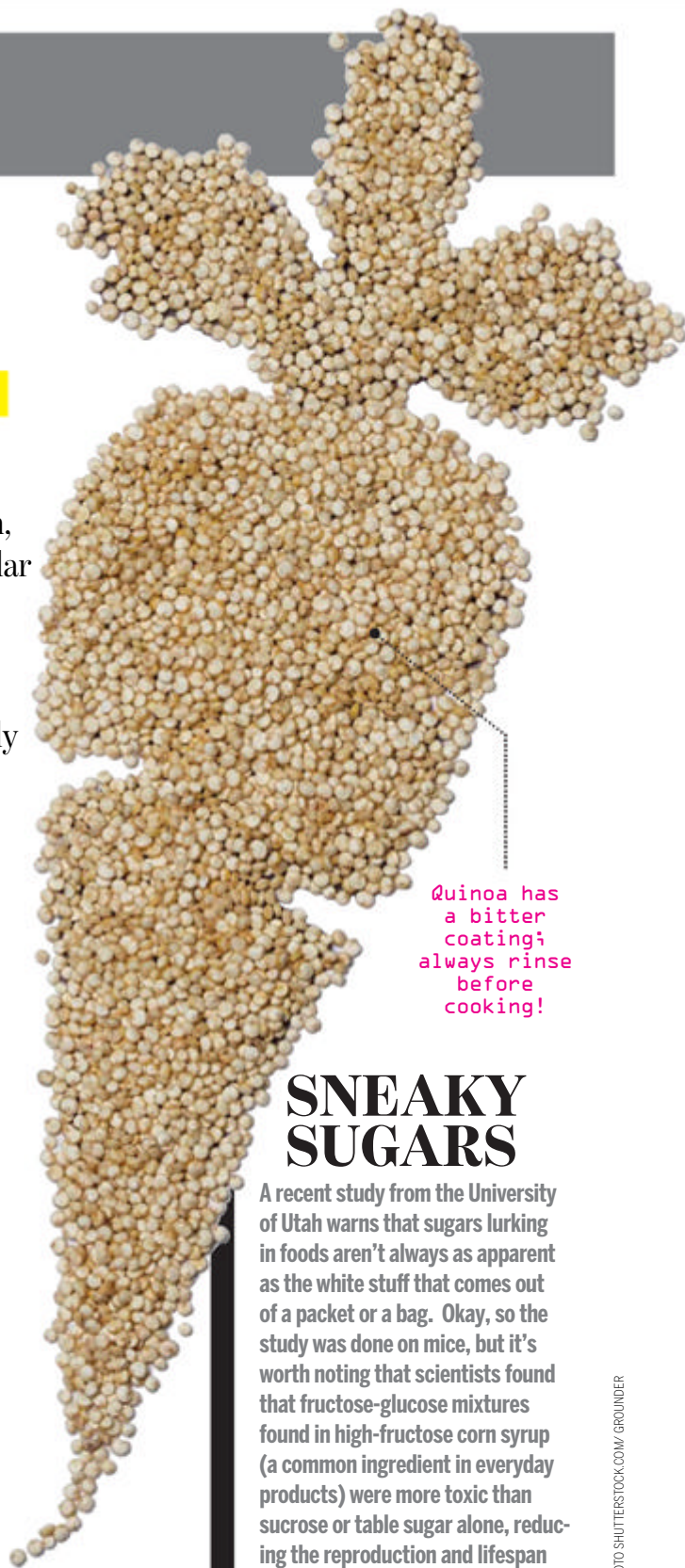
Bottoms up!

Adding Brazil nuts to your afternoon snack could reduce your risk of colorectal cancer. Studies in the *International Journal of Cancer* show that selenium - a micronutrient found in some foods and water - was linked to a reduced number of instances of this invasive disease. Selenium is found in Brazil nuts (one of the best sources), shellfish, red meat, sunflower seeds, mushrooms, onions and flour.



W
C
O

ACCORDING TO A STUDY PUBLISHED IN THE *JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION*, EATING JUST **ONE AVOCADO A DAY CAN HELP IMPROVE BAD CHOLESTEROL LEVELS.**



Quinoa has a bitter coating; always rinse before cooking!

SNEAKY SUGARS

A recent study from the University of Utah warns that sugars lurking in foods aren't always as apparent as the white stuff that comes out of a packet or a bag. Okay, so the study was done on mice, but it's worth noting that scientists found that fructose-glucose mixtures found in high-fructose corn syrup (a common ingredient in everyday products) were more toxic than sucrose or table sugar alone, reducing the reproduction and lifespan of female rodents. Why does this matter? Some packaged products marketed as health food use corn syrup as a sweetener and according to research, even small amounts could be detrimental to your health over time. So always read your labels, even in the health food store.

THE EVOLUTION OF WOMEN'S FITNESS

Photo by Paul Buceta

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Brigitte Dompierre
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COMPETITIONS ★ CAMPS ★ MEDIA ★ MOTIVATION ★ INSPIRATION

SPEARMINT 911

Still feeling sore from your last workout? Researchers say that **spearmint leaves could help curb the after-burn thanks to its anti-inflammatory properties.**

Sometimes used in the form of an ointment applied directly on the skin to soothe an achy body, you can also drink the benefits of this sweet leaf simply by steeping it for 4-6 minutes in boiling water. Sip the tea in the hours after your workout or make it a ritual as part of your wind-down routine in the evenings.

SUPPLEMENT SPOTLIGHT:

Spirulina

What it is: Spirulina is a blue-green algae that is rich in vegan protein and nutrients.

Benefits: Known as a body alkalizer, recent studies say that this sea green aids in everything from weight loss, to attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), hayfever, diabetes, stress, fatigue, anxiety, depression, and PMS.

Available Forms: Spirulina can be found in powder or pill form.

Dosage: Begin with 3-5 grams per day, increase gradually if desired after a few weeks.

DID YOU KNOW?
SPIRULINA IS UP TO 70 PERCENT COMPLETE PROTEIN.

MOOOOVE OVER POWERADE

No doubt that milk has become a controversial food in the last decade, but a recent study published in the journal *Applied Physiology, Nutrition, and Metabolism* found that when compared to popular sports drinks, milk and milk-based products were more effective for hydration post-workout.



MILLIGRAMS

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*BASED ON A 2,000/DAY CALORIE DIET.

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Jamie Eason
Jamie Eason
Fitness Icon
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Don't Go Breaking My Heart

Sorting out marital problems now may protect your heart later. A recent study of 1,200 married men and women found that older couples in unhappy relationships were at greater risk for heart disease than those in nuptial bliss. The study, published in the *Journal of Health and Social Behaviour* found that stress from the struggling marriage had a negative impact on heart health, especially in women ages 70 to 80.

HERE'S ANOTHER TIP FOR YOUR TICKER:
HAVE SEX. STUDIES SHOW THAT GETTING IT ON WITH YOUR PARTNER CAN HELP LOWER YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE.

Prana Power

A large-scale study published in the *European Journal of Preventive Cardiology* suggests that yoga is a “potentially effective therapy” in improving risk factors associated with cardiovascular disease, and may provide the same benefits in reducing heart health risk factors as other physical activities, including biking or brisk walking.

Try this: Within the first 30 minutes of waking, do this simple routine as many times as you can:

1. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart and arms at your side.
2. Inhale and bring your arms overhead; exhale and lower them back down—do this five times.
3. Fold forward and then step back into downward dog for a stretch—hold for five breaths.
4. Lower into plank.
5. Rotate your body to the right for side plank, then to the left—hold each for three to four breaths.
6. Come back to regular plank. Walk your feet to your hands.
7. Inhale and come up to standing, raising your arms overhead into prayer. Exhale and lower your arms down to your sides.

SOUL FOOD

If you reach for ice cream when you're sad, you may need to get in touch with your emotions. Study participants who received emotional training, and therefore were able to recognize certain emotions within themselves and others, were more likely to make better choices when given the option between a healthy snack and a candy bar. Participants who were less mindful of emotions were more likely to reach for the sugar.

Why do I COMPETE WITH UFE?

“UFE gives me an incredible platform to inspire other moms and women that they can achieve anything. They are also an organization that truly listens and works hard for the competitors to give them competitions they can be proud to be a part of.”

MARCIE KING

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PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRIS V. LINTON



HOW TO MASTER...

The Box Jump

If you want to take your fitness level from fairly fit to all-around athlete, incorporating box jumps into your workouts can help you get there faster. Box jumps

are an explosive move guaranteed to strengthen your leg muscles, improve your athletic performance, blast calories and fat, help your balance, and increase bone density. Many people experience fear or hesitation when first attempting box jumps, but once you gain confidence, you'll look and perform like a champion.

1. Stand 1-2 feet away from a plyometric box, step, or sturdy bench that is 14-24 inches high (depending on your fitness level). Feet are shoulder-width apart.
2. Pressing into your heels, perform a semi squat, swinging your arms back as you lower.
3. When you are ready to jump, extend your hips and push through the floor, swinging your arms forward and up to propel yourself up and onto the box. Land with both feet on top of the box or step with knees bent, absorbing the impact through the legs. Think about landing as quietly as possible —do not keep the legs straight and do not pound as you land.
4. From here, you can either jump back down from the box, or step off one leg at a time back to the ground. If you are new to box jumps, or are going to be doing a lot of reps, stepping down one leg at a time will ensure you don't injure your Achilles tendon.
5. Perform as many reps as you can in 30-60 seconds, then rest for 20-30 seconds. Repeat for 3-5 sets. You can also work sets of these into your workouts as active rest.

THINK INSIDE THE BOX

Aside from making you feel like a rock star, box jumps will help your body in a number of areas:

STRENGTH: Your legs will get seriously strong. Box jumps force you to jump as high as you can, utilizing every muscle fiber.

HEART: Because box jumps provide a high intensity type of training, your heart rate will be in the cardiovascular zone for short bursts of time, strengthening your heart and maximizing calorie burn.

POWER: Looking for the extra edge? Box jumps will improve your vertical jump, speed, endurance and coordination.

AGE: Because strong muscles ensure stronger bones, box jumps are perfect for keeping you healthy and balanced as you age.



YOUR EXPERT **Kelly Nickel**, National Exercise & Sports Trainer (NESTA)
Certified Adventure Boot Camp Trainer

If jumping onto an object is challenging at first, you can start by practicing the motion of the box jump by performing steps 1-5 into the air until you feel more comfortable.



AFRAID OF HEIGHTS?
Conquering your fear of box jumps means putting your ego aside and starting small!

PHOTOGRAPHY PAUL BUCETA | MODEL SARAH KASSIMER
HAIR AND MAKEUP SARAH SCOTFORD

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25
MINUTES

EQUIPMENT: KETTLEBELLS,
SKIPPING ROPE, BENCH, STOPWATCH
TIMES PER WEEK: TRY THIS 1-2 TIMES
PER WEEK FOR 4 WEEKS.

ALL FIRED UP

This fast-paced, full-body circuit will crank up your metabolism and incinerate calories.

ROUTINE BY RITA CATOLINO, FITNESS MODEL,
COACH AND TRAINER

Sweater weather is almost behind us,

but if you're not quite feeling ready to strip off those layers, this circuit workout is just the butt-kicking you need to get back in shape. It may only take 25 minutes, but you'll get complete conditioning plus a metabolism boost in one shot. This workout calls upon large and stabilizer muscles to maximize metabolic output and increase caloric burn. It also raises your post-exercise oxygen consumption, which means your body will have to work

harder post-workout to return to a pre-workout state. Stick with this routine over the next four weeks, in conjunction with a solid weight lifting and nutrition program, and melt winter weight while strengthening your cardiovascular system.

How to: Set your timer for 25 minutes. Do the circuit as many times through as you can with minimal rest. Each time you do the circuit, record how many sets you complete. Try to beat that number the next time you do it.

The Workout

EXERCISE	REPS
OVERHEAD KB STEP-UP	10 (PER SIDE)
UNILATERAL SNATCH	15 (PER SIDE)
NATURAL KNEE EXTENSION	15 (PER SIDE)
SKIPPING	100 SKIPS
ALTERNATING LOW-LUNGE JUMPS	10 (PER SIDE)
ALTERNATING KB SWING	10 (PER SIDE)

TRAINER TIP: IF YOU START TO FATIGUE AFTER A FEW ROUNDS, DECREASE THE WEIGHT SO YOU CAN COMPLETE ALL REPS.



1. OVERHEAD KB STEP-UP

REPS: 10 PER SIDE

Set up: Holding a kettlebell in your left hand, stand in front of a bench with feet together. Extend your arm to raise the kettlebell straight up.

Action: Place your opposite foot on the bench. Press firmly

into your heel as you step up, extending your left leg behind you, contracting the glute muscle. Slowly lower your left leg, followed by the right. Complete all reps, then switch sides.



2. UNILATERAL SNATCH

REPS: 15 PER SIDE

Set up: Squat down and grasp the kettlebell handle with one hand, using an overhand grip.

Action: Bend your elbow to pull the kettlebell off the floor and extend your legs. As you extend, "drag" the kettlebell upwards in front of your body, rotating your wrist and thrusting it straight upwards when it reaches shoulder height. Reverse the motion to lower, and repeat for all reps, then switch sides.



5. ALTERNATING LOW-LUNGE JUMPS

REPS: 10 PER SIDE

Set up: Get into a lunge with the right foot in front and place your palms on the floor by the inside of your foot, approximately shoulder-width apart.

Action: Press into your palms and quickly switch legs by jumping your left foot in front and extending the right leg back. Continue alternating for all reps.



3. NATURAL KNEE EXTENSION

REPS: 15 PER SIDE

Set up: Get into a plank position with your feet on the bench, laces down. Keep your core engaged.

Action: Initiate the movement by bending your right knee slightly, lowering your chest towards the ground and bending your elbows. Hold, then contract your hamstring and straighten your leg to return to the starting position.



IDEALLY, COMBINE THIS WORKOUT WITH A HEAVY LIFTING DAY TO GET MAX METABOLISM BOOST.

4. SKIPPING

100 SKIPS

Use any skipping style you're comfortable with. If you trip, just keep going!



6. ALTERNATING KB SWING

REPS: 10 PER SIDE

Set up: Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent, holding the kettlebell in one hand between your legs.

Action: Thrust your hips forward, extending your knees, to swing the kettlebell up to chest height. Raise your other hand to grab the kettlebell handle while it's in the air and switch hands. Continue alternating arms for all reps.

Outer Layers

Get decked out in the latest workout wear for transitioning from winter to spring.

VESTED INTEREST

Ideal for moody temperatures, the quilted *Icy 2 Vest* by **Lolë** is windproof and water-repellent with a stand-up collar to fend off biting breezes. Choose from four colors. **\$120; lolewomen.com**

TEE UP

Made from workout-perfect anti-odor and sweat-wicking material, The *Path Long Sleeve Tee* by **Cory Vines** can be worn on its own or under a vest for an added layer of warmth. **\$35; coryvines.com**

LEG ACTION

These **Adidas** by **Stella McCartney** *Wintersport Seamless Tights* are smooth and stretchy, perfect for flexible movement when you're training outdoors. The snug fit also keeps you warm without letting you overheat, thanks to its nylon/polyester blend. **\$150; adidas.com**

HEADGEAR

Try the anti-slip rubber grip headband from **Cory Vines** to keep hair out of your eyes in the breeze. **\$12; coryvines.com**

Outdoor workouts call for thin layers you can strip off as you warm up.

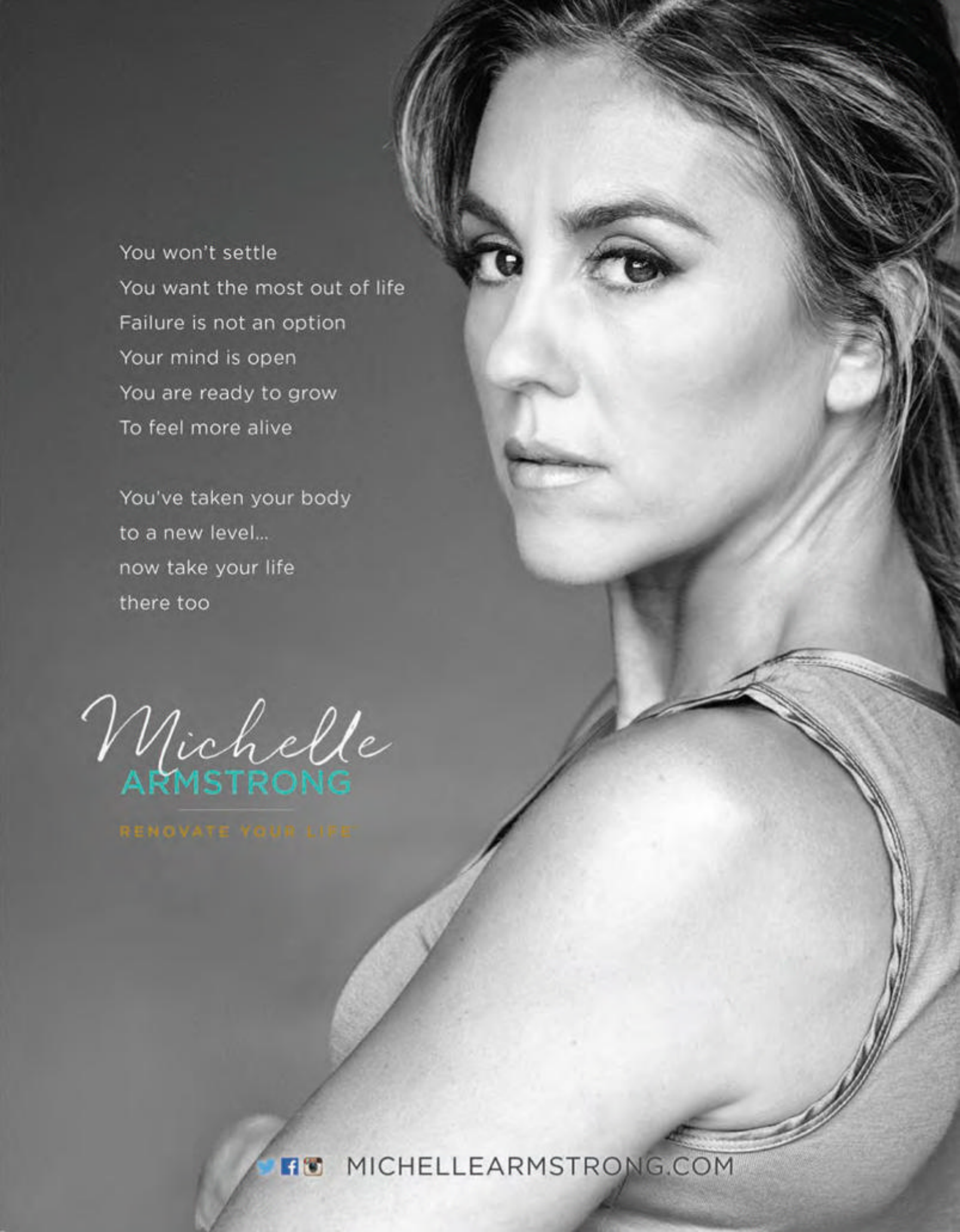
UNDER THE HOOD

The Women's *Sporty Zip Hoodie* by **SuperNatural** features lightweight Terry Loop fabric that retains its shape (even in damp or wet climates), and offers thermo regulation to keep your body from overheating or getting too cool. **\$139; us.sn-supernatural.com (check for retail locations)**

GAINING TRACTION

Inspired by sports car tires, the **Reebok** *ZQuick Electrify Sneaker* is designed for improved handling and traction over wet and dry terrains. It features under-foot grooves for better grip, plus the midsole flexes and expands for extra ground contact and a smooth ride. **\$85; reebok.com**



A black and white portrait of Michelle Armstrong, a woman with long, light-colored hair, looking over her shoulder towards the camera. She is wearing a dark, sleeveless top. The background is a solid dark grey.

You won't settle
You want the most out of life
Failure is not an option
Your mind is open
You are ready to grow
To feel more alive

You've taken your body
to a new level...
now take your life
there too

Michelle
ARMSTRONG

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Get Fresh Faced

Spring clean your beauty routine with professional tips from our experts.

WRITTEN BY LORI FABRIZIO AND VALERIA NOVA, BEAUTY EXPERTS AND FOUNDERS OF *TWO CHICKS AND SOME LIPSTICK*

Ahh, spring! It's that transitional time of year when we break out of hibernation mode and hit the outdoors to soak up the sunshine. Not only is it the season to organize closets and overhaul your fitness regimes, but it's also time you cleaned out that make-up bag by replacing old or expired products with fun new ones suitable for warmer months. Here is a simple guide to cleaning up your beauty routine so you put your best face forward, in and out of the gym.

1.

Toss old products.

After a few months of use, liquid beauty products can start to form bacteria, and preservatives begin breaking down. Replace your mascara every three to six months. While you're at it, consider switching out your heavy foundations for a lighter product, such as a tinted moisturizer or a mineral powder.

TRY: YSL Mascara Volume Effet Faux Cils, \$30; sephora.com

BONUS TIP:

Smashbox Camera-Ready BB Cream (\$39; smashbox.com) is light and fresh, with great coverage and SPF 35! Wear it alone or layered under Smashbox Halo Perfecting Powder (\$49; smashbox.com) for a springtime glow.



2.

Liven up your lips.

Winter dryness can be cruel to your pout. Use a gentle lip scrub to exfoliate and condition your lips. After you've smoothed and hydrated, apply a new lip color in a spring shade. Just make sure it's moisturizing to prevent chapping. **TRY:** Fresh Sugar Lip Polish, \$22.50; sephora.com

BONUS TIP:

Want your lip shade to last even longer? Go for a bright color and try Kat Von D's Everlasting Liquid Lipstick (\$19; sephora.com). We love it for the easy application and awesome color selection. Plus, it lasts for hours, even through your toughest workout!



3.

Wash your brushes!

Taking care of your beauty tools should be done year-round, but spring is a great time to give your brushes a deep clean (and maybe toss a few oldies and replace them with new ones). Technically speaking, you should be washing your brushes every one to two weeks depending on product buildup.

TRY: BlenderCleanser SOLID by beautyblender, \$16.50; sephora.com

BONUS TIP:

Make sure to lay your brushes flat to dry after washing. This helps to keep the moisture from loosening the hairs.





SHOW YOUR STRONG SIDE

Apparel Available at STRONGFITNESSMAG.COM

SPRING CHICKEN

RECIPE BY JANICE DE BOER, RD PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAUL BUCETA

Bored of basic chicken breasts? Try this quick recipe that calls upon Moroccan-inspired flavors to spice up your favorite lean protein source. Loaded with antioxidants and amino acids that promote muscle recovery, this hearty salad is bound to become a new staple in your meal plan.

MOROCCAN CHICKEN SALAD

PREP TIME: 10 MIN • TOTAL TIME: 25 MIN • MAKES 2 SERVINGS

- 1 7-oz chicken breast, halved
- 2 tsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp canola or grapeseed oil
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- Dash ground cinnamon & cayenne pepper
- Freshly-ground black pepper, to taste
- 6 cups mixed baby greens
- ½ medium orange sweet pepper, seeded and thinly sliced
- 1 mini cucumber, thinly sliced
- 2 Tbsp low-fat plain, soft goat cheese
- 2 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 3 tsp extra virgin olive oil, divided
- 2 slices multi-grain bread
- ¼ tsp garlic powder
- 1 Tbsp fresh cilantro, chopped

1. Move oven rack up to top level. Pre-heat broiler to high.
2. In a small bowl, combine lemon juice, oil, cumin, cinnamon and cayenne.
3. Brush spice mixture over both sides of the chicken breasts and place them on a baking sheet and sprinkle with black pepper.
4. Place chicken under the broiler for 15 minutes, turning once.
5. Meanwhile, toss baby greens with balsamic vinegar and 2 tsp olive oil. Divide between two plates and top each with sweet pepper, cucumber and crumbled goat cheese evenly.
6. Toast bread. Brush with remaining olive oil and sprinkle both sides with garlic powder.
7. Remove cooked chicken, let cool slightly and slice. Arrange over salads and top with fresh cilantro. Place toast on each salad and serve.



Body Benefits

- Lean protein and antioxidants will help speed up your recovery time post-workout.
- Goat cheese has fewer calories and lactose than cow's-milk cheese, but more protein, potassium and vitamin A. It's also easier to digest than other dairy products.

NUTRIENTS PER SERVING:

Calories: 390, Fat: 14 g, Carbs: 35 g
Fiber: 7 g, Protein: 33 g

Cooking Tip:

Watch chicken carefully and lower the rack if it is cooking too quickly or burning.

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Show Stopper

World Fitness Champion Stacie Venagro is proof that if you want to compete on this stage, you'd better have what it takes.

WRITTEN BY SANDY BRAZ, DEPUTY EDITOR
PHOTO BY GORDON J. SMITH

TO BECOME a professionally ranked competitor in the Fitness category takes more than an incredible body. Once hugely popular in the world of women's bodybuilding, Fitness is a contest not only of musculature and posing atop five-inch heels, but also gymnastic ability, endurance and physical strength. Today, the Fitness category is continuously shrinking, and many in the industry consider it a dying sport. But to four-time World Fitness Champion Stacie Venagro, the show must go on.

HEALTHY OBSESSION

Stacie grew up as a kid who danced, twirled, ran and played sports; she was into everything from acrobatics to basketball. So it was no surprise when, in her late 20s, she started competing in Fitness to combine her high energy and physical strength. "I needed to do something to showcase what I could still accomplish at 27," says Stacie, now 30, who has brought home six first-place trophies since her debut on the stage in 2012. "Someone in the fitness world showed me the ropes for my first show. Once I got on that stage, I was hooked."

PERFORMANCE ENHANCER

With a dwindling presence in the industry, one could wonder

what motivates a competitor to stick with the Fitness category. But for Stacie, there's no shortage of love for the sport, especially when it comes to creating themes for her performances. "I'm a powerhouse when it comes to my routines," she says. "My last theme was based on the film *300*; I love capturing the audience's attention and bringing them into it."

STAGE PREP

"Outside of weight training six days a week, I also do functional training and calisthenics to help me with my routines," says Stacie, who uses HIIT, box jumps, push-ups and running to get her body into show shape. "Sprints are another good workout to prep, since they help tone my legs and

glutes, as well as help build endurance." Closer to show day, she likes to practice her routine in small blocks to build up her stamina, both mentally and physically.

FUTURE OF FITNESS

Although it attracts fewer competitors, the Fitness category still draws a huge audience, remaining one of the most interesting spectator sports in bodybuilding. "I think the category is starting to be eliminated simply because fewer women are doing it and it takes a toll on your body," says Stacie, who currently runs her own fitness studio in Rhode Island. "But I see it being around for a few more years, even though it seems to be getting smaller."

OWNING THE SPOTLIGHT:

Stacie flips out on stage at the 2014 Fitness America Championships.



"I prepare by asking the other competitors if they need help with their routines. It gets me out of my own head and out of my own way."

Stats

AGE: 30 **HEIGHT:** 5'8"
LOCATION: Cranston, RI
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:
2012 World Miss Fitness America
2013 World Miss Fitness America Pro
2014 Miss Fitness Universe Pro
2014 World Miss Fitness America Pro



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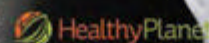
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ONE WOMAN SHOW

BY THE TIME SHE WAS BARELY OUT OF HER TEENS, TESSA VIRTUE WAS AN OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST AND WORLD CHAMPION IN PAIRS ICE DANCING.

Now, a year after the Winter Games in Sochi, this 25-year old virtuoso is taking on the world in a whole new way, pushing the boundaries in every area of her life. From photo shoots, to candid interviews, solo projects and training, this young woman is coming into her own and, finally, breaking the ice.

WRITTEN BY SANDY BRAZ, DEPUTY EDITOR | PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAUL BUCETA
ROUTINE BY MARIA MOUNTAIN, MSC, CSCS ►

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MORE THAN A DECADE, TESSA VIRTUE DOESN'T REALLY HAVE A PLAN.

It's rare, but she's rolling with it, and you can tell by her ear-to-ear smile, it's a welcomed change of pace.

Up until now, her life has been bound by structure. Everything from workouts and meals to traveling and appearances have been dictated by strict schedules, her time broken down into slots of productivity and training. It might sound grueling—and she admits at times it has been—but when you're aiming for the Olympics, a solid game plan is mandatory for success, and Tessa happily obliged.

But now, just over a year after capturing the silver medal for Team Canada in the Sochi Winter Games—a dramatic nail-biting showdown against the Americans—she and skating partner of 17 years, Scott Moir have decided to put the brakes on competing, at least for the moment. While the duo will still be performing in showcases like *Stars on Ice*, Tessa's life has suddenly become much less regimented, and she's opening herself up to new projects and opportunities. A new chapter in her life is just beginning and this superstar athlete is ready to reinvent herself.



SFM: When did you know your skating career was taking off?

TV: I was always fiercely determined and never strayed from wanting to be the best. I knew our commitment was serious when we moved away from home when I was 13 to train, and again at age 15 when we moved to the United States. But it wasn't until the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver that I truly understood what an impact the sport would have on my life.

SFM: Is there anything that you wish you knew at the start?

TV: I wish I had known that when people hurt you, it's often out of fear. I wish I knew just

how strong the pressure would be to conform to a body-image ideal that is unreasonable and frankly, sad. I wish I knew the lengths people would go to bring you down when you are succeeding. But I also wish I knew how special the whole ride would be, bumps and bruises, highs and lows, every single step of it.

SFM: How did you handle the pressures of being in the public eye?

TV: My strategy is to lead the best life I can and focus on my own goals and priorities. Having said that, the overriding element of being in the public eye is the ability to be a role model, something I am very conscious of and take seriously.

“*I always doubted myself, never feeling good enough. I know now that I am me—and that is enough.*”

SFM: Who is a source of inspiration to you?

TV: My mom, Kate, is without question my biggest inspiration. She is smart, thoughtful, witty, and compassionate. There are times when my hectic schedule stresses me out, and then I remember that she completed her MBA while raising children and maintaining a full-time job. She's the strongest woman I know.

SFM: What has skating with a partner taught you about yourself?

TV: As an introvert, I have a tendency to bottle up my feelings. When you're one half of a team, that's not a very successful business model. Skating with a partner has taught me patience. It's also made me realize the importance of unconditional support and understanding. The partnership Scott and I share is based entirely on trust, communication, and common goals; things we constantly work on building and maintaining.

SFM: What are your goals now?

TV: I'm very close to finishing my psychology degree. School has proven to be a healthy outlet for me, providing balance despite the all-consuming world of sport.

SFM: How have your workouts evolved, post-competing?

TV: My workouts are so much more fun. I'm able to challenge myself in new ways without worrying about how my on-ice training may be affected. For over a decade, every exercise was designed with a purpose—it needed to be functional and apply directly to what I needed to execute on the ice. Now, I can wear boxing gloves and hit a punching bag if I want to, simply because it's an awesome workout.

SFM: What are some of your fitness goals now?

TV: When I was competing, all that mattered was how efficient, powerful, and functional I was on the ice. I was always aiming to be in top shape so as to better perform and push the limits on the ice. Now, I train to feel good. I'm doing it for me, not because I know a panel of officials will judge me.

SFM: First thoughts after your program at the 2014 Olympics?

TV: I have never experienced the kind of exhilarated pure joy I felt after our skates in Sochi. After 17 years of commitment, sacrifice, and hard work, we skated the best we could have. It was a dream, and I was just so happy and proud.

SFM: In your opinion, what makes a champion?

TV: If there's anything I've learned, it's that there are no short cuts. There's no secret recipe to success—it takes hard work, and lots of it. There's also a mental toughness involved in being the best that requires such grit, such resilience.

HEAVY MEDAL

A glimpse at Tessa's collection of hardware.

WINTER OLYMPICS

Gold - Vancouver 2010
Silver - Sochi 2014
Silver - Sochi 2014 (Team Canada)

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Gold - 2012 Nice
Gold - 2010 Turin
Silver - 2013 London
Silver - 2011 Moscow
Silver - 2008 Gothenburg
Bronze - 2009 Los Angeles

PURSUIT OF POWER

When your workout goals extend beyond improving your exterior, stamina and agility come to mind as major players in the journey towards attaining ultimate fitness.

For Toronto-based personal trainer Maria Mountain, whose clientele of world-class athletes include our cover athlete, Olympic medalist Tessa Virtue, training to be elite is all about cultivating power. "This workout builds the athlete from the inside-out, making sure the stabilizers are as strong and smart as they need to be so the athlete can express her power and dexterity more efficiently, and with reduced risk of injury," says Maria, who designed the killer agility-focused routine on the following pages. "I look at the demands of the sport and the needs of the athlete from a movement perspective and then select or create exercises that will give them the tools they need to perform."

TURN THE PAGE FOR TESSA'S WORKOUT



THE WORKOUT

This workout is divided into three supersets. Perform all reps of the first exercise in the superset, followed immediately by the next without resting. When all exercises in the superset are completed, rest 30 seconds, and repeat. Complete all sets in Superset A before moving to Superset B, and so on.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

KETTLEBELL • TRX • BENCH • DUMBBELL • RESISTANCE BAND • AGILITY LADDER

SUPERSET

	EXERCISE	REPS	SUPER SETS
A	A1: ½ Turkish Get Up	3 per side	3
	A2: Contra DB Stiff Legged Deadlift	6 per side	3
B	B1: TRX Push Up + Reach	5 per side	3
	B2: Agility Ladder	6-4-2	3
	B3: Staggered Stance Pallof Press	8	3
C	C1: KB Single-Leg Squat to Tap	6	3
	C2: TRX Single-Arm Row	6	2

REST FOR 30 SECONDS BETWEEN SUPERSETS.

1/2 TURKISH GET UP

Set up: Lie on your back holding a kettlebell in your right hand and press it towards the ceiling. Bend your right knee with your foot flat on the floor and extend your left leg straight out.

Action: Keeping the kettlebell raised, roll to your left shoulder **(A)** then come up onto your elbow **(B)**. From here, straighten your left arm rotating your hand so your fingers point behind you and come up to a tall position using your abdominals, hips and triceps **(C)**. Slowly reverse the motion, repeating each step in reverse, to come back to the starting position.





CONTRA DB STIFF-LEGGED DEADLIFT

Set up: Stand upright holding a dumbbell in your right hand. Pick up your right foot slightly and balance on your left foot.

Action: Hinge from your hip, bringing your torso towards the floor and your right leg straight out behind you. Pivot forward until you feel a gentle stretch in your standing leg. Squeeze your glutes to return to the starting position. Repeat for all reps, then switch sides.

TRX PUSH UP + REACH



Set up: Stand holding a TRX handle in each hand and extend your arms out in front of you. Engage your core and lean forward slightly.

Action: Bend one elbow to perform a push-up motion with one arm, while the other arm remains straight and reaching overhead. Straighten your bent arm to return to the starting position, then repeat on the other side. Continue alternating sides for all reps. ▶

Push into both handles with equal pressure to keep the TRX from shifting.

AGILITY LADDER

Set Up: Stand adjacent to the agility ladder at one end, just outside the box, with your right foot closest to the box. Face forward, not towards it.

Action: Leading with your right foot, step inside the box, followed

by your left, and repeat down the ladder as quickly as you can while staying inside the boxes. Once you make it to the end, repeat to return to the starting position, beginning with the left foot. Each direction is considered one rep.



STAGGERED STANCE PALLOF PRESS

Set up: Stand sideways to a resistance band or cable column. The foot closest to the anchor point should be forward and both knees should be bent. Hold the handle with both hands at chest level (A).

Action: Without moving your torso, press the handles straight out from your chest to fully extend your arms (B). Using control, return to the starting position. Repeat for all reps then switch sides.

Start with a light load; this move is more challenging than it looks.

TRX SINGLE-ARM ROW



To make this move harder, step closer to the anchor. Move further away to make it easier

Set up: Stand facing a TRX holding one handle. Take up any slack in the strap and then walk your feet forward until your body is at a 20-30 degree angle to the floor (A).

Action: Lower yourself down until your arm is fully extended (B). Keep your torso square as you pull yourself back up to the starting position; use your back muscles, not momentum. You can keep your non-working arm extended to help ensure you are keeping your body square.



KB SINGLE-LEG SQUAT TO TAP

Set up: Hold a kettlebell (or dumbbell) at chest level with both hands. Balance on one leg and stand in front of a box, bench or chair (A).

Action: Begin by reaching your hips back, bending at your knee and ankle as you squat down to lightly tap the box with your glutes (B). Do not sit down, just tap and then push your foot into the ground and return to the starting position. Repeat for all reps then switch legs. **S**

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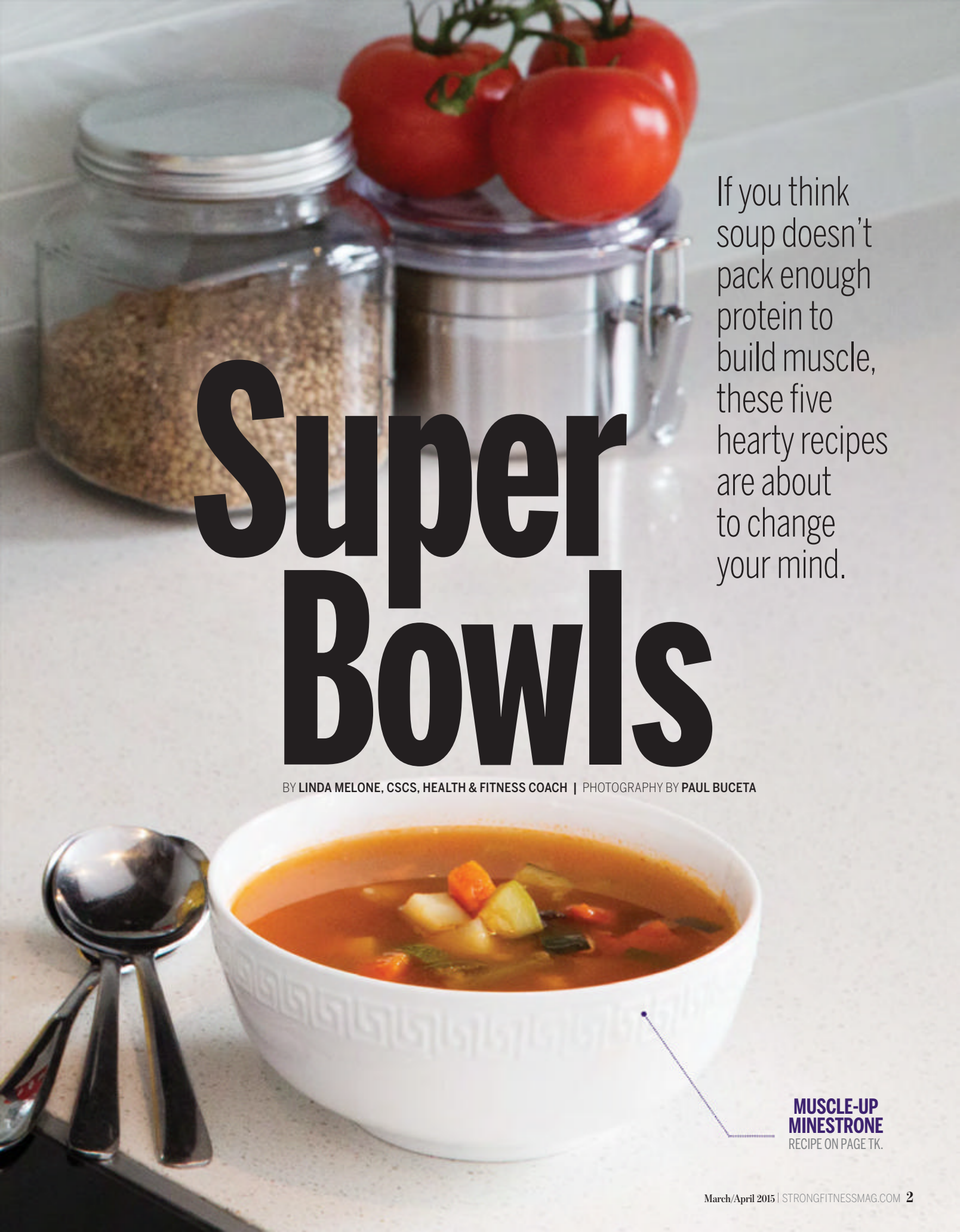
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A kitchen scene featuring a bowl of soup, jars of grains, and tomatoes. In the foreground, a white bowl with a Greek key pattern around the rim is filled with a thick, orange-colored soup. The soup contains chunks of white potatoes, orange carrots, and green leafy vegetables. To the left of the bowl, two silver spoons are stacked. In the background, a clear glass jar filled with brown lentils sits next to a stainless steel thermal jar with a silver clasp. Three ripe red tomatoes are perched on top of the thermal jar. The entire scene is set on a light-colored, speckled countertop.

Super Bowls

BY LINDA MELONE, CSCS, HEALTH & FITNESS COACH | PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAUL BUCETA

If you think soup doesn't pack enough protein to build muscle, these five hearty recipes are about to change your mind.

**MUSCLE-UP
MINESTRONE**
RECIPE ON PAGE TK.



Soup often brings to mind watery broth with limp vegetables

and if you're lucky, a few pieces of chicken thrown in for good measure. They're not typically considered high-protein, muscle-building fare—until now. “Homemade soups that contain beans and lean meat or fish can provide good sources of protein,” says Rene Ficek, a registered dietitian and nutrition expert at Seattle Sutton's Healthy Eating. “Beans also add bulk and fiber to the meal.”

We created simple soup recipes that do exactly that, delivering 15-30 grams of quality protein in each serving, plus fiber, complex carbs and tons of vitamins and minerals. So the next time you're chilled on a rainy day, (or you're ravenous after a tough workout), chow down on one of these five simple recipes. You won't look at soup the same again.

Chunky Chicken Vegetable

PREP TIME: 10 MIN • TOTAL TIME: 35 MIN • MAKES 2 SERVINGS

½ Tbsp olive oil

8 ounces chicken tenders, cut into bite-size pieces

1 small zucchini, diced

1 garlic clove, minced

½ tsp dried basil

1 tomato, chopped

1 14-ounce can reduced-sodium chicken broth

2 Tbsp orzo or other small pasta

1 ½ cups packed baby spinach

1. Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add chicken and sauté until browned, about 4 minutes; transfer to a plate and set aside.

2. Add zucchini, garlic, basil and cook, stirring often, until the vegetables are slightly softened, about 2 to 3 minutes.

3. Add tomatoes, broth and orzo; increase heat to high and bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook until the pasta is tender, about 8 minutes.

4. Stir in spinach, cooked chicken and any accumulated juices from the chicken; cook, stirring, until the chicken is heated through.

NUTRIENTS PER SERVING:

Calories: 417, **Fat:** 22 g, **Carbs:** 33 g, **Fiber:** 3 g, **Protein:** 23 g

Muscle-Up Minestrone

PREP TIME: 15 MIN • TOTAL TIME: 45 MIN • MAKES 4 SERVINGS

1 Tbsp olive oil
1 garlic clove, minced
1 small onion, diced
1 celery stalk, diced
1 large potato, diced
1 small zucchini, diced
½ cup fresh green beans,
cut into 1-inch pieces
1 28-oz can diced tomatoes
with liquid
3 cups vegetable broth
1 19-oz can cannellini beans
1 15-oz can black beans
1 tsp dried basil (or 1 Tbsp fresh)
½ tsp dried oregano
(or 1 tsp fresh)

1. In a large pot heat the oil, add the garlic and onion and sauté until onions are slightly softened, about 5 minutes.
2. Add the celery, potato, zucchini, green beans, tomatoes and broth. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer 30 minutes.
3. Add beans and seasonings and heat through.

NUTRIENTS PER SERVING:

Calories: 312, Fat: 5 g, Carbs: 59 g,
Fiber: 16 g, Protein: 19 g



Lean & Mean Lentil Soup

PREP TIME: 10 MIN • TOTAL TIME: 1 HR • MAKES 4 SERVINGS

1 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
1 small onion, diced
2 carrots, chopped
1 parsnip, diced
1 bay leaf
8 cups low-sodium chicken
or vegetable stock (more
as needed)
1 cup lentils, rinsed
1 cup baby spinach

1. Over moderate heat, sauté olive oil and onion in a pot until just tender (about 5 minutes).
2. Add carrots, parsnip, and bay leaf. Cook for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until carrots begin to soften.
3. Add stock and bring to a simmer. Add lentils and cook for 30 to 40 minutes until soft (add more stock if needed).
4. Stir in spinach and remove from heat. Let cool slightly, then pour into a blender and purée until smooth. Reheat before serving if desired.

NUTRIENTS PER SERVING:

Calories: 260, Fat: 4 g, Carbs: 37 g
Fiber: 16 g, Protein: 20 g

Toast
multigrain
bread for
crunchy
croutons and
drizzle with
olive oil.



Save time
on meal prep
throughout
the week by
doubling
the recipe.

Fit Fish & Leek

PREP TIME: 5 MIN
TOTAL TIME: 25 MIN
MAKES 2 SERVINGS

1 Tbsp olive oil
1 leek, chopped
2 cups low-sodium chicken
broth
1 cup broccoli, chopped
1 small zucchini, diced
8 oz fresh or frozen cod, cut
into bite-size pieces
1 cup packed baby spinach
1/8 tsp fresh ground black
pepper, or to taste
1 tsp each: dried oregano
and basil

1. Heat oil over medium heat in a large saucepan; add leek and sauté 2 minutes. Stir in broth and bring to a boil.
2. Add broccoli and zucchini and simmer 3 minutes.
3. Add fish and simmer until it turns opaque, approximately 3 more minutes.
4. Add spinach and seasonings and simmer 2 more minutes. Serve.

NUTRIENTS PER SERVING:
Calories: 210, **Fat:** 8 g, **Carbs:** 10 g
Fiber: 1 g, **Protein:** 26 g

 Get a muscle-building chili recipe
at strongfitnessmag.com





Springtime Salmon Chowder

PREP TIME: 10 MIN • **TOTAL TIME:** 40 MIN • **MAKES** 4 SERVINGS

1 Tbsp olive oil
1/4 cup celery, diced
1 medium yellow onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
3 medium red bliss potatoes, skin on, diced
3 cups low-fat evaporated milk
6 oz cooked or canned salmon
1 tsp dried dill
Salt and pepper, to taste

1. Heat oil in a medium saucepan.

2. Sauté celery, onion, and garlic until softened, approximately 5 minutes.

3. Add potatoes and milk. Cover and simmer on low, stirring frequently, until potatoes are tender, about 15 minutes.

4. Stir in salmon, dill, and salt and pepper until salmon is heated through.

NUTRIENTS PER SERVING:

Calories: 364, **Fat:** 6 g, **Carbs:** 51 g

Fiber: 3 g, **Protein:** 28 g

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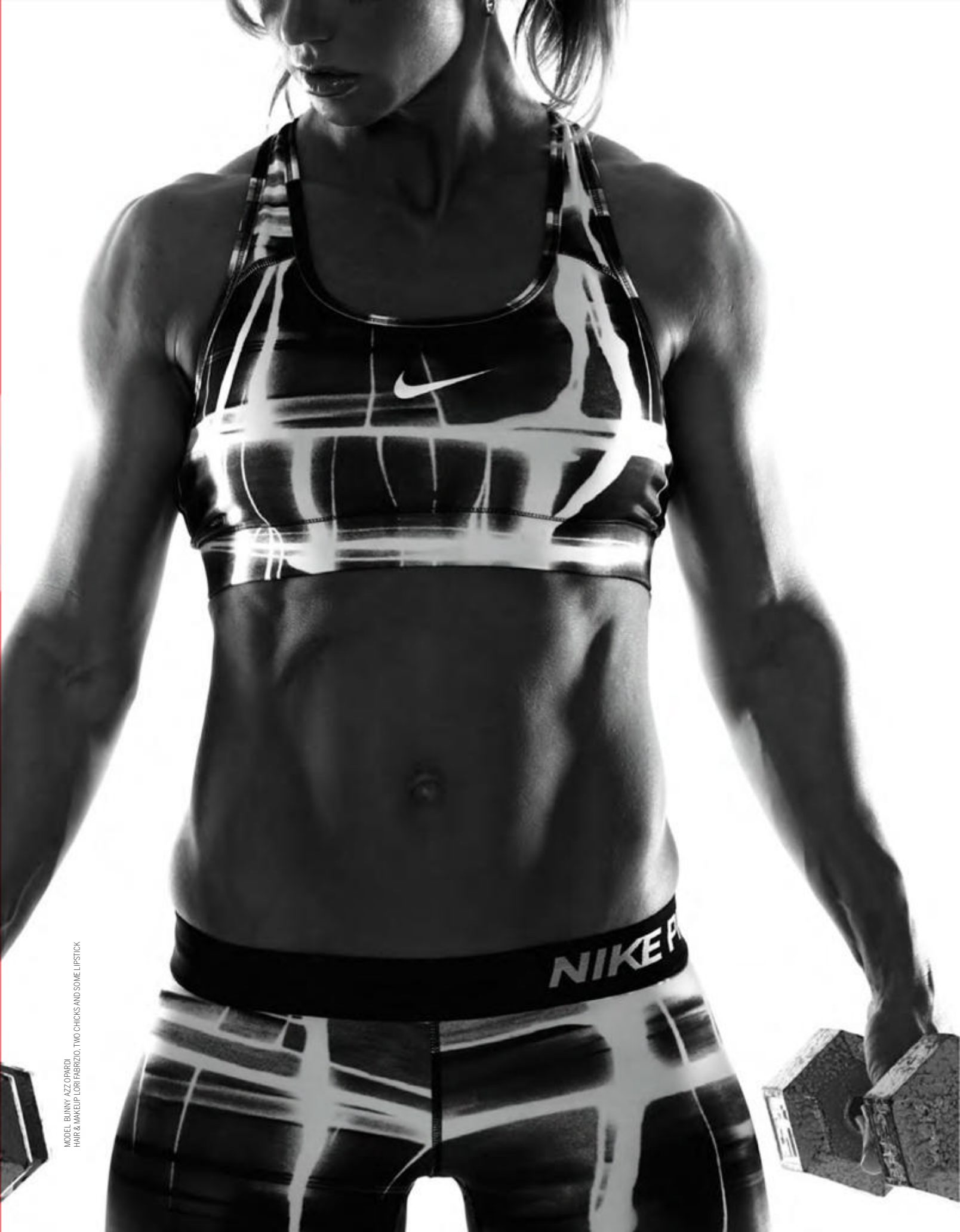


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HAVE TO WORK YOUR ASS OFF.**

CHAIN REACTION

WRITTEN BY LINDSAY KENT, MASTER TRAINER, ISSA CES PROFESSOR PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAUL BUCETA



MODEL: BUNNY AZZOPARDI
HAIR & MAKEUP: LORI FABRIZIO, TWO CHICKS AND SOME LIPSTICK



TRADITIONAL FITNESS THEORY HAS TAUGHT US THAT WEIGHTLIFTING SHOULD BE DONE SEPARATELY FROM CARDIO

as our bodies aren't quite efficient enough to deal with multitasking (that is, simultaneously burning fat and building muscle). But what if there was a method of training that could bridge the gap between these two all-important goals? What if you could achieve optimal function as well as your ideal body composition in one workout, without setting foot on a cardio machine?

Enter Metabolic Chains: a training technique in which you perform several mini-workouts (each one is a chain) within a single training session, for a high-octane conditioning program that not only incinerates fat, but also promotes muscle growth. This type of training—a form of training that's referred to in

the industry as “metabolic physique conditioning”—combines some of exercise theory's most effective practices (metabolic conditioning, anaerobic interval training, and high-volume isolation work) with whole-body, dynamic movements. It may sound grueling, and it is, but tough it out and the results will be worth every bit of the effort, and may change the way you think about traditional training.

Linking the Chains

Metabolic chains are effective because they target each of the body's three primary energy systems: the ATP-CP and glycolytic systems, the two responsible for short bursts of energy, and the oxidative system, which handles longer, lower intensity activities. Together, these

pathways contribute to your body's ability to maximize fat loss, as well as build and preserve lean muscle tissue, while also increasing its potential for functional, dynamic movements.

Research indicates that these types of workouts can increase metabolic rate in women by up to 60 percent for up to 16 hours after a workout, inducing the EPOC effect, or Excess Post Oxygen Consumption, which is essentially a workout's ability to produce the “afterburn” effect through an increased rate of oxygen uptake following intense exercise. In a study conducted by the *International Journal of Obesity*, 15 weeks of intensive, metabolic workouts burned over 100 percent more fat than traditional cardiovascular work.

HOW IT WORKS

Each metabolic chain is built around three major principles:

1. MULTI-JOINT EXERCISES

MPC workouts focus on using multiple planes of motion and movement while stimulating a full spectrum of muscle fibers. Compound movements increase lactic acid in the body, which is a necessary adaptation for the manufacturing of human growth hormone, a fundamental component of both fat burning and muscle building.

2. OVERLOAD (A.K.A. PROGRESSION)

This principle states that you must progressively increase intensity, load, or volume in order to see measurable changes in your physique. Each chain will include variables such as multiple repetitions, sets and techniques such as super-setting or tri-setting in order to facilitate a large volume of work, which will increase testosterone production, creating an awesome catalyst for muscle growth.

3. REST BASED TRAINING (RBT)

Each metabolic chain is going to be high-intensity, so adequate rest periods are imperative to making it through the entire workout. Rests should be just long enough to recover, but minimal enough to keep your body in work mode. While there is no pre-determined work-to-rest ratio for this workout, resting when form begins to fail is how you should govern this workout. Determining rest periods this way will begin to train your internal timing device (see the “Telo-Anticipatory Effect” below) while keeping your metabolism firing.

The Telo-Anticipatory Effect

Rather than using pre-defined time limits or traditional interval training, athletes can learn to regulate energy expenditure physiologically. By listening to your body's sensory feedback (feelings of fatigue, breaking form, etc) you can determine your own rest period requirements, based on the principle that fatigue in a workout is not due to one regulatory component. A central programmer in the brain can be trained to create an optimal metabolic pace for an athlete in order to complete an intense bout of exercise in the quickest time possible.

THE WORKOUT

HOW TO: This workout utilizes a “Down Chain” method, meaning that the number of reps will decrease each time you repeat the chain. After you complete the chain once through at 5 reps per exercise, repeat, decreasing the reps from 5 to 4, then 4 to 3 and so on until you reach 1 final repetition. Complete the below workout **ONCE** through, utilizing the RBT concept (resting only when needed) and Down Chain method. The goal is to complete all four chains, but if you are short on time or need to decrease the intensity and/or volume, reduce the amount of chains you perform in one workout.

THE LINGO

Chain: Multiple exercises linked together into one, seamless movement.

Base: The first portion of the chain that is performed for one rep only.

Focus: One or more movements that are decreased with each repeat of the chain.

CHAIN
1

INCHWORM PLANK > PUSH-UP > REVERSE LUNGE W/ LEG LIFTS

Base: From standing, place your palms on the ground and keeping your legs straight, walk your hands out until you are in a high plank position.

Focus: Once in plank position, perform 5 push-ups. Walk your hands back up to your feet, return to standing, and immediately step one leg behind you. Bend your knees and lower into a lunge, straighten, and lift your back leg at the top of the movement, squeezing your glutes. Lower your leg back, keeping it behind you and repeat. Complete 5 reps on this leg, then repeat on the other side. Repeat the entire chain with 4 reps, then 3, then 2, then 1.

BASE

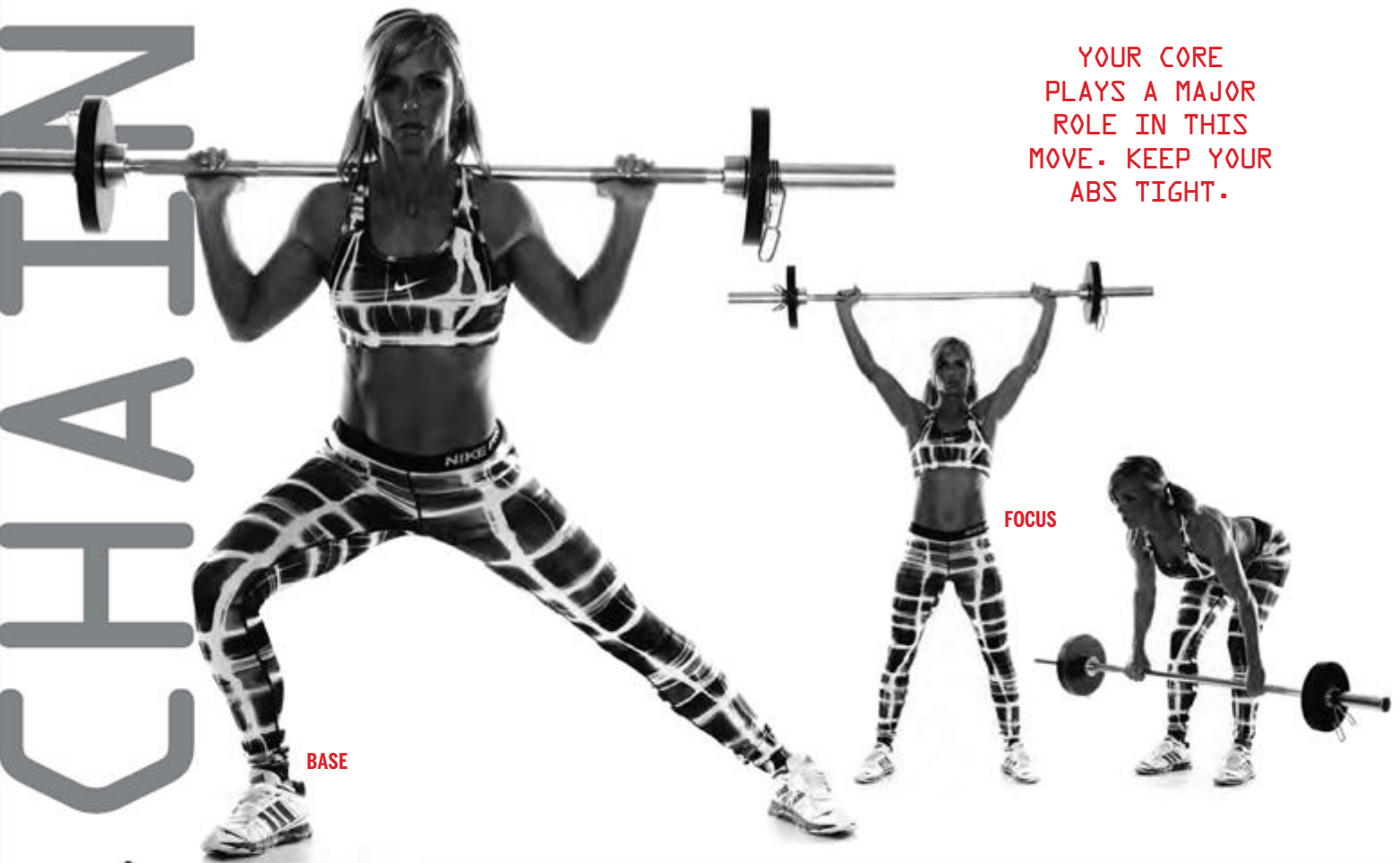
IF YOU START TO BURN OUT, PERFORM PUSH-UPS FROM YOUR KNEES.

FOCUS



CHAIN

YOUR CORE
PLAYS A MAJOR
ROLE IN THIS
MOVE. KEEP YOUR
ABS TIGHT.



2

ALTERNATING SIDE LUNGE > OVERHEAD PRESS > DEADLIFT

Base: Place a loaded barbell across the back of your shoulders and stand with feet together. Take a big step to the side with one foot, lower into a lunge, return to center and repeat on the opposite leg.

Focus: At the top of the last lunge, bring the barbell in front of your chest with palms facing out. Extend your arms straight overhead, and lower back down for 5 reps. Bring the barbell in front of your thighs with palms facing in. With arms extended, lower the barbell towards the ground, bending your knees slightly, then return to standing. Perform 5 reps. Repeat the entire thing with 4 reps, then 3, then 2, then 1.



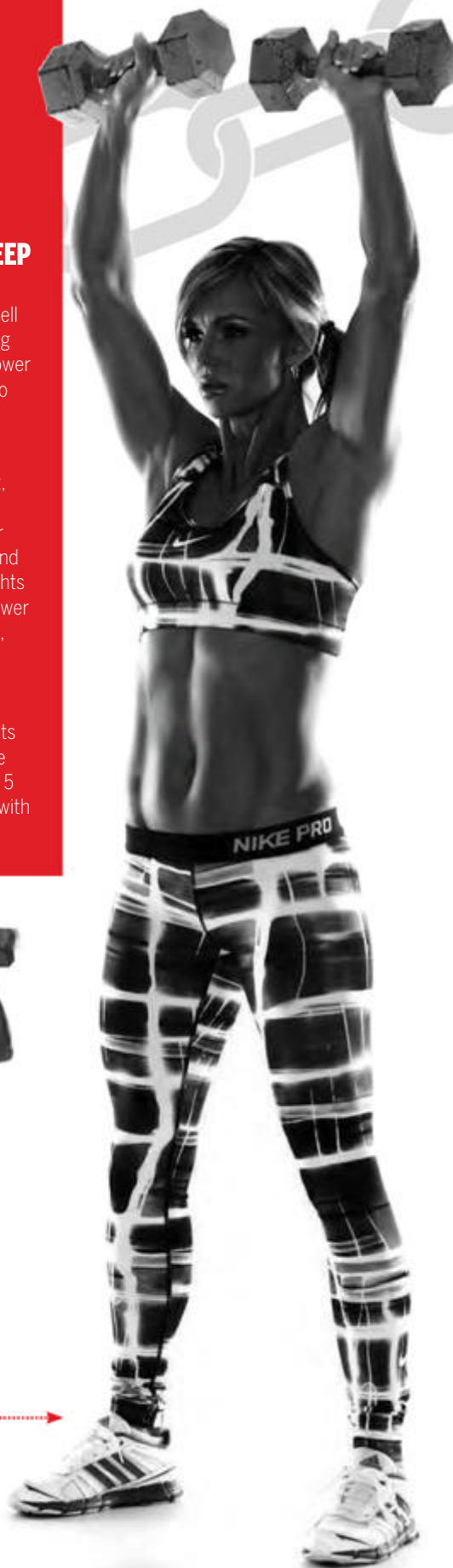
3

CHAIN 3

DUMBBELL SQUAT > BENT-OVER ROW > DEEP SWIMMER'S PRESS

Base: Stand holding a dumbbell in each hand with palms facing in. Push your hips back and lower until your thighs are parallel to the ground, then extend your legs to return to standing.

Focus: At the top of the squat, bend over at the hips with a straight back and extend your arms towards the ground. Bend your elbows and pull the weights up to your torso, hold, then lower for 5 reps. Return to standing, then bend at the elbows and curl the weights up to shoulder height, rotate your palms outward, and press the weights straight up overhead. Reverse the movement and repeat for 5 reps. Repeat the entire thing with 4 reps, then 3, then 2, then 1.



PRESS YOUR
HEEL INTO
THE FLOOR FOR
STABILITY



BASE



FOCUS



CHAIN
4

DUMBBELL CURTSY LUNGE > ALTERNATING LATERAL RAISE > FRONT RAISE

Base: Holding dumbbells at your sides, take one big step behind the opposite leg, bend your knees and lower into a lunge. Return to center and repeat on the other side.

Focus: At the top of the last curtsy lunge, return to center and simultaneously raise the dumbbells straight out to your sides to shoulder height, forming a "T" with your body. Lower the weights back down, then simultaneously raise them straight up in front of you to chest height. Lower back down and repeat the lateral raise. Continue alternating, then repeat for 4, 3, 2, 1.

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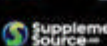
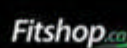
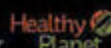


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BRAIN DUMP

If stress has your mind as cluttered as your closet, it may be time for a mental clean out. How managing the burden of stress can help you perform better in the gym and in your life.

WRITTEN BY KASIA WIND
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAUL BUCETA



According to the latest statistics released by the American Psychological Association, one in four women report that their stress levels are “**extreme**” and more women than men reported symptoms of:

From work to workouts, birthdays to bills, stress can take up a lot of brain space.



Lack of motivation

44%

UNABLE TO
CONTROL
IMPORTANT
THINGS IN LIFE
27%

Feeling overwhelmed

44%

EXPERIENCING
FATIGUE

41%

7 STRESS-
BUSTING
TECHNIQUES

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT

spring-cleaning something in your life, chances are that you envision a scene that resembles a fitness version of *Hoarders*. With warmer weather signaling the season of renewal, it's an ideal time for women to de-clutter everything from old yoga pants to stale gym routines. But, in order to truly reset and start the season fresh, experts are recommending that women work to reduce the load of their mental junk just as much as the physical, lightening the burden of stress in their lives. In other words? You need to clean out your mind, not just your closet.

Let's face it: as awesome as they are, no amount of new sports bras are going to help you feel like you're mentally prepared to take on everything that's likely on your plate, including your finances, your family and even your fitness goals. "Mastering stress is critical, because it can not only help women perform in the gym, but also perform in their lives," says Eva Selhub, MD, a Clinical Associate of the Benson Henry Institute for Mind-Body Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital, lecturer in Medicine at Harvard Medical School and author of *Your Health Destiny* (HarperOne, 2015). "You'll see more energy, higher self-esteem, a positive attitude and better relationships," she says. "Life will feel more manageable and you'll feel more capable of handling anything that comes your way."

YOUR BODY ON STRESS

Here's another reason you should consider some serious stress intervention: science shows that even so much as thinking back to a stressful event can mean a major hit to your immune system and your health. In 2013, researchers at Ohio University found that healthy women who dwelled on a nerve-racking experience (in this case, it was giving a speech to a stone-faced panel during a fake job interview) had increased levels of C-reactive protein, a marker of inflammation in body tissue. "What we're finding out now is that chronic inflammation in the body is probably the source for almost all problems," says Selhub. "Inflammation is involved in heart disease, depression, auto-immune disorders, allergies, joint problems, mood disorders—pretty much everything."

Aside from doing a number on your immune system, stress impacts all of your vital bits, putting your cardiovascular, digestive, hormonal, respiratory, and metabolic systems into overdrive every time you get stuck in traffic or are running late to an appointment. Studies are increasingly linking stress to a mixed bag of health consequences, affecting the entire body. The most recent research shows that stressed

out women experience a reduction in blood flow to the heart (a risk factor for heart attacks and strokes) that's three times greater than in men; that women with the highest levels of stress hormones are twice as likely to experience infertility as those with low levels; and that high stress levels can increase the frequency of almost all types of headaches.

MIND OVER MATTER

Despite the beating your body takes during stress, your brain is your biggest ally when it comes to getting your life back in balance. Just like bad hair days and people who will always cart 16 items in the express lane, stress is an inevitable part of life; while you can't avoid it entirely, how you handle it dictates how happily and healthfully you live. "Stress that becomes harmful to the body is stress that your brain believes is impossible to manage," says Selhub. "The key is to perceive stress as manageable."

After speaking with stress experts from across the country, STRONG has identified the seven techniques on page 67, based on mindfulness science, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and positive psychology, as the ones most likely to minimize your brain's stress levels.

THE UPSIDE OF STRESS

"Our body is beautifully designed to respond to stress," says Joseph Shrand, MD, an instructor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and author of *Manage Your Stress* (Harvard Health Publications, 2012). Biologically, you are hard-wired to protect yourself from danger which is why, the second your boss calls you into her office for an impromptu meeting, your palms begin to sweat, your senses sharpen, your muscles tighten, your blood pressure increases, your heart beats faster and your breathing quickens.

The discomfort you feel is a direct response to an instant cocktail of stress hormones, such as cortisol and adrenaline, that your body sends through your bloodstream when it perceives that you're in trouble, to help you survive. While it's

exactly the response you want if you're being chased by a saber-toothed tiger, unfortunately, your body can't distinguish between minor hiccups and life-threatening situations, so it reacts to your boss's meeting in the same way it would to a dinosaur that wants to eat you for dinner. Over time, this response to chronic stressors can begin to wear away at your body, says Shrand, leading to major health consequences and disease. In the short term, however, the heightened stress response may be able to help you accomplish Herculean feats (like running away from a dangerous situation), provide a short boost to your workouts

(due to increased adrenaline and additional blood and oxygen being diverted to your muscles) and, according to a recent study, even help you to better retain information. "Ultimately, you have to remember that there's a fine line," says Selhub. "There's stress that we can use, and stress that uses us."

Late for a meeting?
Try to keep your cool.



7 WAYS TO STAND UP TO STRESS

Strategies you can use daily to become more resilient to stress and transform your life.

1

Live in the Now

Forget what's happening tomorrow or the next day. Instead, focus your attention on living in each moment, says Laurisa Dill, a psychotherapist at the Mindfulness Clinic in Toronto, who often uses Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) techniques when working with clients. "Stepping back from whatever is going on and getting back in touch with direct experience can help you to become fully present and aware."

TRY IT: FEELING STRESSED?

Dill recommends placing your hand on your abdomen, feeling your breath coming in and out, and focusing on the sensation of your breathing, your body—and nothing else. Control your breath, keeping it slow and deep; you should feel your belly (not just your chest) rise and fall with each inhale and exhale. Not only can this technique help you to "turn off your brain" and stay focused on the direct sensation of your body, rather than an unpaid bill or a deadline, deep breathing also helps to slow your heartbeat and lower your blood pressure, reducing the stress response. Bonus: "It increases nitrous oxide to your brain, which is the same as laughing gas," says Shrand. "You're going to relax your brain, and a relaxed brain will think more clearly than a stressed out brain."

New to mindfulness?

You don't have to be a practiced monk to reap the rewards. In a 2014 study from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, researchers found that just 25 minutes of mindful meditation, based predominantly on breathing exercises, conducted for three consecutive days, helped to improve cortisol reactivity in healthy individuals, making them more resilient to stress.

2 GET REAL

When faced with stress, your brain's go-to thoughts are usually negative and, most importantly, irrational, according to *Stress Management: Approaches for Preventing and Reducing Stress*, a report by Harvard researchers. There's a part of you that's hard-wired to think in worst-case scenarios—that just because you're late for work you're going to get fired. The good news is that distorted thinking ("cognitive distortions") can be changed with a little practice; it all starts with catching yourself in the act, then finding a healthier thinking pattern.

TRY IT: IS YOUR BRAIN BEING A DRAMA QUEEN?

"If you're getting caught up in a negative thought, ask yourself whether a friend would see it that way, or whether others would agree that it is 100 percent

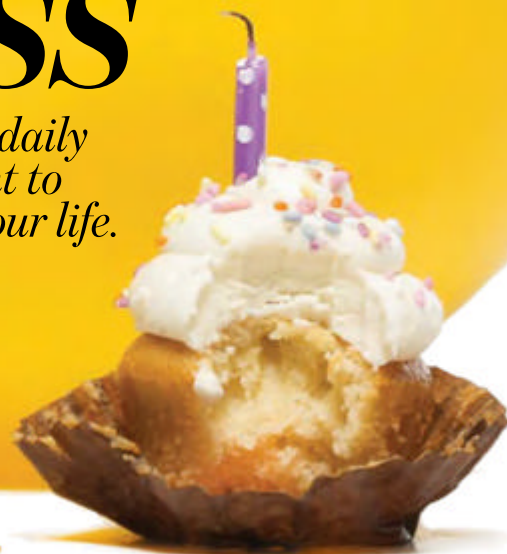
true," says Dill. Label the thought, recognizing whether you're missing any gray areas (all-or-nothing thinking), mistaking one bad experience for a pattern of bad events (overgeneralization), exaggerating the bad or dismissing the good (magnification or minimization) or assuming that you know what others are thinking (mind reading). Next, ask yourself: "Is this belief true?", "Did I jump to a conclusion?", "What evidence do I have?" and "What's the worst that could happen?". End off by replacing your negative thought with something more realistic and come up with a plan for how you're going to solve any problems. For example, "I'm going to be fired" might become, "This is the first time I am late; my boss will understand" and "I'll make up the time after work."

3

TRUST YOURSELF

Ask any stress expert and they'll likely tell you that poor self-esteem is a huge contributor to stress, for one, because it reduces your confidence in being able to handle the situation. The truth is that you can't control what life throws at you, says Selhub, but you can control how you feel and react. "You can't predict the future, so instead of telling yourself, 'This is going to be okay', tell yourself, 'I'm going to be okay'."

TRY IT: REFRAME HOW YOU SEE YOURSELF DURING TIMES OF STRESS. Instead of beating yourself up for feeling frazzled, recognize that you're doing the best you can in the given situation at the given moment, says Shrand. "Tell yourself that you are at your current maximum potential and don't judge yourself," he says. "Doing this will help you to respect yourself, which will lead to positive changes and a sense of power over the situation." ▶



4

Stick to Your Values

Have you ever felt discouraged after failing to meet a performance goal? "In athletes, perfectionism can be a source of stress," says Dill. To overcome it, she says it's important to develop a sense of self-worth based on internal factors, such as your beliefs and values (for example, living a good life or being good to others) rather than external factors which are hard to control, such as your fitness outcomes. "I advise my clients to have intrinsic values, and to hold themselves accountable to those, rather than external outcomes."

TRY IT: FIRST, IDENTIFY WHAT YOUR VALUES ARE (HARD WORK, STRENGTH, LOVE, HARMONY, ETC.) Then, reflect on challenging times in your life where you were able to stay true to those values, even if the outcome wasn't what you wanted. "Ask yourself how the value helped to guide you through that situation, acknowledging that the outcome wasn't as important as sticking to those values," says Dill. Thinking in this way can help to keep you relaxed and motivated, even when things don't turn out as planned, (or perhaps you didn't quite hit your fitness goal), can inspire you to continue trying, especially if your values include not giving up.

Don't sweat the small stuff. Do what you can and be grateful you did!



5 START "SINGLETASKING"

Between work, home and our personal lives, women have a lot of choices, says Dill. "It's common to feel a fear of 'missing out' on opportunities," she says, "so they tend to take on a lot and find themselves stretched thin." While multitasking can lead to stress, it's unrealistic to expect that you'll only ever have a single thing going on at a time, so the key is to stay aware during everything that you do, she says. "You can have multiple goals, but make conscious transitions between the tasks."

TRY IT: TAKE A "MINDFUL BREAK" BETWEEN TASKS, so that each one has a concrete beginning and end, allowing you to focus all your attention on one thing at a time. For example, if your "To Do List" includes both sending a work email and spending time with your kids, finish the email and close your laptop lid, telling yourself that work time is over and family time is beginning. Drawing clear lines will help to re-orient your attention and keep your mind from wandering back to your job while you're with your loved ones.

6 Avoid Overtraining

Exercise is a de-stressor, but it can also be stressful on the body if you push yourself too hard. "If you're overtraining, you're not giving your body a chance to rest and recuperate, so you're likely to have more fatigued muscles and more inflammation," says Selhub. Over time, overtraining can sabotage your performance, which can lead to more stress.

TRY IT: TO KEEP YOUR WORKOUTS IN THE HEALTHY ZONE, PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR BODY WHILE YOU TRAIN for signs that might indicate that you're getting burned out, such as fatigue and dehydration. Allow for adequate rest days and make sure you're fueling for your sweat sessions with plenty of water and a nutrient-rich diet.

7 GIVE THANKS

Appreciating the small things in life, from a beautiful sunset to the perfect cup of coffee, can help you to stay positive and balanced, according to stress experts. "Expressing gratitude can help you to feel connected to something larger than yourself," says Selhub. "You will start feeling whole."

TRY IT: KEEP A GRATITUDE JOURNAL, advises Selhub. Every day, spend five to 10 minutes writing down three to four things that you're thankful for, no matter how big or small. Make sure you include a list of your daily accomplishments, from finally getting around to washing your car, to finishing the last class of an important course you've been working on. As you make your list, conjure up the scene in your mind, soaking in the experience all over again. Selhub suggests adding entries at the end of each day, and reading them back to yourself out loud in the morning. At the end of the year, look through your journal and reflect on the positive. "Reminding yourself of what you have, as opposed to what you don't have, can help with stress reduction." **S**

GOOD NEWS FOR STRONG WOMEN

Your workout routine already helps in making you more resilient to stress. Over the last year, studies have found that breaking a sweat, in addition to a healthy diet and sleep routine, can help to reverse the age-related impacts of stress, and make individuals feel more confident in their ability to balance work and home life.

Not some lame BCAA drink!

Lisa Delahaye
PERFECT Athlete
Pro Fitness Model

PERFECT

ADVANCED ENGINEERED NUTRITION

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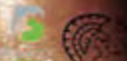
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There's more than one way to build a sick lower body. Find out what you should be doing when it comes to the world's greatest exercise.

YOU DON'T KNOW SQUAT

WRITTEN BY AMANDA KOTEL, B.SC EXERCISE SCIENCE, CPT | PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAUL BUCETA

In the world of weight training, the standard back squat is the king of exercises. In terms of building strength, burning fat and developing a strong set of glutes, it rules. But just because it's revered as the lord of leg day, doesn't mean you're limited to one style of squatting week in and week out.

Often neglected or forgotten, several variations of the squat exist, each with unique benefits and targeted muscles. Like the back squat, other squat techniques mimic movement patterns we use daily; they train the body to work optimally for both sport and life. Incorporating squat variations into your training plan is key to making improvements to your body and athleticism, avoiding plateaus, and keeping things interesting. Read on to find out which squats are best suited to your goals and how to make them a part of your workout the next time you're at the rack.

MODEL: TIFFAN LEE CHASE MAKEUP & HAIR: MONICA KALPA



FIVE REASONS TO SWITCH UP YOUR SQUATS

1. You want to build or define other muscles.

Some squat styles can isolate the quads, hams, calves and core more effectively than the back squat. Incorporating a few variations makes sure you hit every angle.

2. You've hit a plateau.

If you religiously work on your back squat every single week, your muscles have likely started to adapt to the exercise. Adding some variety is key to making improvements in your strength and physique.

3. You don't like them.

Hey, they're not for everyone. But the squat is still among the top exercises to perform for overall physical health, so find a couple of variations that you enjoy and stick with them.

4. Improve muscle imbalances and mobility.

Training with a variety of movement patterns improves flexibility and strengthens weaker muscle groups, which in turn can help repair injuries and correct muscle imbalances.

5. There's a line-up for the squat rack.

Not every squat exercise requires a barbell. Have a few effective variations in your back pocket for when the equipment you need is occupied. ▶



IF YOUR HEELS COME UP WHEN YOU LOWER, WIDEN YOUR STANCE.

1

Goblet Squat

One of the simpler squats to master, the Goblet reinforces the basic squatting movement pattern, helping to perfect your back squat form. If you have poor ankle mobility or wrist flexibility, tight lats, or shoulder instability, this is a solid squat option for improving those areas.

SET UP: Hold a kettlebell by the handles close to your chest and stand with feet wider than shoulder-width apart.

ACTION: Bend your knees and squat deeply, dropping your elbows just inside your knees. Keep your chest lifted and maintain a neutral spine. Make sure you're not falling forward or rounding your back. Press through your heels and extend to return to standing.

2

IF RANGE OF MOTION IS LIMITED, DO NOT USE ANY WEIGHT. HOLD YOUR ARMS STRAIGHT OUT IN FRONT OF YOU INSTEAD.

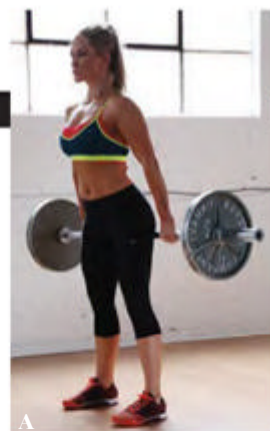


Barbell Front squat

This squat targets the low back and abdominal muscles more than any other squat exercise and places less stress on the knees. It can help improve flexibility in the shoulders, hips and ankles, and is an effective tool for training acceleration and athleticism (think speed and power).

SET UP: Hold the barbell with an underhand grip between your clavicle and shoulders (not on the bone), with elbows pointing forward and upper arms parallel to the floor. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart.

ACTION: As you squat down, keep your elbows pointing forward and chest lifted by bracing your core. Lower into a deep squat, pause, then extend your knees and hips to return to standing.



3

Barbell Hack Squat

This is an excellent move for strengthening your VMO (vastus medialis oblique)—a part of your quad located just inside your knee—as well as back erectors, abs and shoulder stabilizers, especially when performed with free weights instead of a machine. This is a tough move, however, so use lighter weights to begin with if you're new to this exercise.

SET UP: Stand with your back to a barbell placed in a power rack. Grab the bar with a shoulder-width grip, palms facing the back. Lift the bar and hold it just behind your thighs.

ACTION: Squat down until quads are parallel to the floor, maintaining a straight torso and neutral spine throughout the movement. Press through the balls of your feet to return to standing.

WEAK IN THE KNEES?

It has been proclaimed for years that if you want healthy knees, stay away from squatting of all kinds.

But increasing research has not only disproven this rumor, it has also proven the opposite to be true. Studies show that squatting—done properly and progressively—is not only *safe, but is highly effective at strengthening the

hamstrings, quads, low back and abs, all of which can help protect your knees from injury.

**Of course, there are exceptions... If squats aggravate an old injury or cause sharp pain in your back or knees, definitely quit squatting*

and reach out to a professional. Hire a trainer to help you go back to basics with your squats and make sure you're doing them correctly, or seek the advice of a physiotherapist or doctor to make sure there isn't an underlying issue.



ENGAGE YOUR
CORE TO HELP
KEEP YOUR
CHEST LIFTED

4

Cyclist Squat

This is an excellent move for strengthening the muscles that support the knee joint and patella (kneecap). It also isolates and favorably recruits the VMO muscle (see the Hack Squat for explanation of the VMO).

SET UP: Grab a pair of dumbbells and stand with your heels on small blocks or weight plates so most of your weight is in the balls of your feet.

ACTION: Using control, squat down, taking 4-5 seconds to lower. Rise slightly (about a quarter of the way up), squat back down, then quickly return to standing, pressing through the balls of your feet as you rise.

If squats aggravate an old injury or cause sharp pains, quit squatting and reach out to a professional.

5

CHECK YOURSELF: YOUR BICEPS SHOULD BE LEVEL WITH YOUR EARLOBES. IF YOUR UPPER BACK ARCHES, YOU NEED TO WORK ON SHOULDER FLEXIBILITY AND ABDOMINAL STRENGTH BEFORE DOING THIS MOVE.



ADVANCED MOVE

Overhead Squat

A favorite among crossfitters, this squat variation both demands and develops functional strength and flexibility. This is a super advanced training technique so you need a good, strong squat as well as stable, flexible shoulders. If you are new to this exercise, begin using a broomstick or a 5-lbs bar.

SET UP: Stand with feet shoulder-width apart with your weight in your heels. Grasp the bar with a very wide, overhand grip and raise it overhead. Keep your low back in a neutral position and your head and eyes forward.

ACTION: Engage your core. Squat down until your hip crease is below your kneecap, keeping your chest forward and maintaining a slight arch in the lower spine. Press through your heels to return to standing.

SAMPLE WORKOUT

Mix squat variations into your next lower body workout using this example as a template. Your legs won't know what hit 'em.

OVERHEAD SQUAT

Warm Up

Begin by warming up with this movement pattern, using a dowel or 5-lbs bar.

Sets 3-4

Reps 10-12

Rest 45-60 sec

FRONT SQUAT

Warm up for 1 set x 20 reps, then perform 4 heavy sets. Increase your weight each set until you are near failure on sets 3 and 4. Rest 90-120 sec between sets:

Set 1: 15 reps

Set 2: 12 reps

Set 3: 10 reps

Set 4: 10 reps

GIANT SET: CIRCUIT

Set up your station to limit rest time between exercises. Try not to rest between exercises if possible. Pick a moderate to heavy weight that is challenging but does not take you to failure.

Goblet squat
x 12-15 reps

Cyclist squat
x 12-15 reps

Hack squat
x 12-15 reps

Rest 90 sec

Repeat x3 

Find more ways to squat.
 strongfitnessmag.com



Energy Upgrade

TWO ESTEEMED NUTRITION EXPERTS, ONE HOLISTIC APPROACH TO FEELING ENERGIZED.

WRITTEN BY KIRSTYN BROWN, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAUL BUCETA

SLUGGISH. FATIGUED.

Drained. Spent. If you've uttered these words at all today, your instincts might be telling you to down another double espresso. But the answer to your low energy dilemma isn't at the bottom of a coffee cup—it's in your diet. "A lot of people look to sugar and caffeine for energy," says Brendan Brazier, vegan athlete and author of the *Thrive Energy Cookbook*. "But the problem is these give you energy by stimulation, not nourishment, which eventually burns out your adrenals."

Physiologically speaking, it's our adrenal glands' job to produce adrenaline and cortisol hormones in response to stressors (helping us launch into flight or prepare to fight). However, caffeine triggers the exact same hormonal response with each cup, providing that burst of temporary alertness we've come to know and love. This is harmless if you're an occasional drinker, but as a coffee-obsessed culture, we're overtaxing our adrenals and becoming less sensitive to stimulants.

With this in mind, we reached out to two nutrition experts in

search of more sustainable sources of energy. Their advice? Load up your diet with foods containing the nutrients your body needs to function optimally—like the ones listed here—and eventually you won't have to rely on lattes just to get through the day. "The key is to eat foods that are part of a holistic lifestyle," says Susan Levin, MS, RD. "This will help condition your body overtime. You'll sleep better and you'll recover faster, and then you can train more. This is the approach that makes elite athletes."

LENTILS

The key to improved energy here, as with many legumes, veggies and whole grains, is fiber. It may not be the sexiest nutrient, but what it lacks in excitement it makes up for in health benefits. "Mainly, fiber helps with digestion," says Levin. "If the food you're consuming isn't moving through you, you're going to feel sluggish and weighed down. The more fiber you eat, the better food is moving through you." Levin

adds that fiber slows down the absorption of glucose, which helps to regulate blood sugar and avoid spikes and crashes that can leave you feeling drained. "Fiber is very important for feeling energized, especially when you're working out regularly."

OTHER SOURCES: SPLIT PEAS, BLACK BEANS, RASPBERRIES, GROUND CHIA AND FLAX SEEDS, STEEL CUT OATS, ARTICHOKE, PEARS, BROCCOLI, CABBAGE.

FISH

Fish and seafood are sure-fire, heart healthy ways to get your dose of B12, a vitamin that's linked to a number of functions within the body including red blood cell formation, nervous system and brain function and yes, energy levels (a symptom of B12 deficiency is a lack of energy and weakness). A 4-oz serving of cod or tuna nets you more than a hundred percent of your daily value, and just 3 oz of clams gets you around 10 times that amount. But bad news for vegans, warns Levin: B12 is made by bacteria and found almost exclusively in animal products. "You won't get it reliably from plant sources," she says. "Every vegan and vegetarian should be taking a B12 supplement unless they're eating fortified foods."

OTHER SOURCES: POULTRY, BEEF, LAMB, ORGAN MEATS, DAIRY, FORTIFIED CEREALS.

KALE

In the last few years, kale has become the trendiest veg in the superfood crew. But make sure your love of this leafy green isn't just a fling—especially if your goal is to feel re-energized. Incredibly rich in vitamins and minerals, kale and its cruciferous cousins should be staples in your diet. These greens rank high on the list of alkaline-forming foods, meaning those that help balance out your body's pH levels, which in turn reduces inflammation. "When your muscles are inflamed it makes it harder for you to move efficiently, causing greater fatigue," says Brazier. Chronic inflammation, he adds, can also drive up levels of the stress hormone cortisol, a side-effect that can get in the way of a good night's sleep.

OTHER SOURCES: SPINACH, BROCCOLI, SEAWEED, SWISS CHARD, COLLARD GREENS, ASPARAGUS, CABBAGE, SALMON, GARLIC, PAPAYA, GINGER, TURMERIC.

Kale also provides 6 percent of your daily value of iron.

BEETS

You've noticed the letters NO on your container of pre-workout formula? That's nitric oxide, and it's the key to beets' energy-lifting properties. "Beets produce nitric oxide which can boost energy and improve athletic performance," says Brazier. How? This root veggie naturally contains high amounts of nitrates, a chemical absorbed from the soil. When you ingest them, nitrates are converted into nitric oxide, which increases blood flow to the muscles, helping your body to produce energy more easily. One study in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* found that when fit men and women ate 200 grams of baked beets before running a 5K, they improved their time by approximately 3 percent.

OTHER SOURCES: CELERY, RADISHES, WATERCRESS, ARUGULA, PARSLEY, SPINACH, ENDIVE, FENNEL.



Check it out! Vegan athlete and best-selling author Brendan Brazier shares his recipe for an energizing breakfast smoothie at strongfitnessmag.com



Water-dense foods count towards your overall intake of H₂O, so eat lots of hydrating foods like soups, celery, melon and lettuce.

WATER

Okay, so it's not exactly a food, but water plays a major role in your energy. Not sipping enough H₂O causes your blood to thicken, making your heart work harder to pump it, causing fatigue. "Sometimes people who feel sluggish or don't have much energy think they're lacking a nutrient," says Levin. "But often times they're just dehydrated." Water also helps keep fiber moving, improving digestion, helping you function optimally and feel energized. While water requirements tend to differ from person to person, the average recommendation is 64 oz per day, says Levin, so that's a good place to start. For active women who are training and sweating regularly, they'll probably need to aim higher than the typical eight glasses a day.

OTHER SOURCES: HERBAL TEA, BROTH-BASED SOUPS, WATERMELON, BERRIES, CUCUMBER, CELERY, ICEBERG LETTUCE, GRAPEFRUIT.



This high-intensity routine combines serious strength training with head-to-toe conditioning. Better call for back up.

TEAM EFFORT

ROUTINE BY LORI HARDER AND ANGELIKE PSINOS NORRIE,
FITNESS EXPERTS AND COACHES | PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAUL BUCETA



HAIR & MAKEUP TWO CHICKS & SOME LIPSTICK
SHOT ON LOCATION AT WYNN FITNESS, MISSISSAUGA



Why Lori loves it:
"This workout is great alone, but even better with a friend. Not only are you getting awesome full-body training, you're getting some serious HIIT at the same time."

A GOOD TRAINING PARTNER

can be every bit as important to an epic workout as your favorite straps or best gym playlist; she helps keep up the pace, pushes for more reps, and makes sure you don't slack—even on burpees. So the next time you're in the mood for a high-intensity, full-body training session, don't go it alone. Call up your BFF (best fitness friend) and challenge her to this unique superset routine. Sure, it can be done alone, but kicking her butt will be a lot more fun.

HOW TO: This workout is comprised of supersets: Perform 12 reps of each exercise, and complete 3 sets of the superset before moving to the next. Make sure to rest 60-90 seconds between supersets. ▶

SUPERSET 1



Hang Clean & Press

SET UP: Grasp a barbell with an overhand grip and stand up straight, holding it in front of your thighs (A).

ACTION: Bend your knees slightly then explosively extend your legs as you pull the bar up your body to shoulder height. In a

fluid motion, rotate your wrists to catch the bar on your upturned palms (B). Bend slightly again, then extend your arms to press the bar overhead, locking your elbows (C). Reverse the motion to return to the starting position.



FORWARD LUNGE WITH SINGLE-LEG DEADLIFT

SET UP: Stand holding a dumbbell in each hand at your sides.

ACTION: Take a large step forward and lower until both knees are 90 degrees (A). Immediately push off your front foot to return it to the starting position, then raise that leg straight behind you as you hinge from the waist, lowering the weights towards the floor. Return to the starting position and complete all reps before switching legs.



Star Push-Up Pop Squat

SET UP: Begin in high plank position with your arms and legs extended (A).

ACTION: Jump your feet wide apart and perform a single push-up (B). As you come up, jump your feet back together (C), then immediately up towards your hands, raising your body up and landing in a low squat with your arms out in front of you (D). Quickly jump back into high plank and repeat the entire sequence.

THIS MOVE IS PERFORMED LIKE A BURPEE: QUICKLY AND FLUIDLY.



IF TRAINING WITH A BUDDY,
HAVE YOUR PARTNER DO ONE
EXERCISE WHILE YOU DO THE
OTHER, AND ALTERNATE, MOVING
THROUGH THE SUPERSET AS
QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

SUPERSET 2

Leaning Lateral Raise

SET UP: Holding a dumbbell in one hand, grab onto a machine or bar with the opposite hand and stand with feet together, close to the apparatus. Lean your body away from the machine until your arm is fully extended.

ACTION: Keeping a slight bend in your elbow, raise the dumbbell from your side up to shoulder height, isolating the shoulder. Pause at the top of the movement, then slowly lower.

SMITH MACHINE SUMO SQUAT

SET UP: Load a Smith Machine with desired weight. Stand in front of the bar with feet wide apart (about as far as they can go) and toes pointed out. Place the bar across your upper back.

ACTION: Unlock the safety, and lower into a deep squat, pushing your hips back and keeping your knees in line with your toes. Pause at the bottom of the movement, then press through your heels and extend your legs to return to the starting position. ▶

SUPERSET 3

Bulgarian Split Squat

SET UP: Stand facing away from a flat bench holding a pair of dumbbells down at your sides. Place one foot on the bench behind you, laces down.

ACTION: Bend your front knee and squat down until your front thigh is parallel to the floor and your knee is over your toes. Extend your front leg and press up to the starting position.

**BALANCE IS KEY:
STAY STRONG
AND FOCUSED.**



ABDOMINAL PULLOVER

SET UP: Grab a dumbbell and lie face-up on a flat bench. Hold the dumbbell behind your head and extend your legs straight out, pressing your low back into the bench.

ACTION: Use your core to crunch up, raising your legs and arms simultaneously so your shoulders and hips come off the bench. Bring the dumbbell towards your ankles and hold, then slowly lower back down.



Shotgun Lunge with Rear Delt Fly

SET UP: Holding light to moderate dumbbells, take a big step forward with one foot and lower into a deep lunge, keeping your back leg straight. Bring the dumbbells down by your front foot.

ACTION: Keeping your torso stationary, straighten your front leg and raise the weights out to the sides, squeezing your shoulder blades. Bend your knee and lower the weights back to the starting position. Perform all reps on this leg then repeat on the other side. **S**

UNCOVER YOUR STRONG



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THE ENTIRE EXPERIENCE PHOTOGRAPHED BY PAUL BUCETA

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RUNNING WILD

For more than 3,000 miles and 150 days, Christina Lee ran across America for a cause. What she discovered at the end of the road was more than she ever expected to find.

WRITTEN BY SANDY BRAZ, DEPUTY EDITOR
LEAD PHOTO BY HENRY HUNG

WHEN YOU'RE RUNNING on the open road with nothing between you and your thoughts but the sound of your breath, things can get pretty real, and fast. For 23-year old Christina Lee, who ran more than 3,000 miles across America between July and December last year, that's exactly what happened. "I've learned so much about how—not necessarily what—I think about the world," says Christina, who started the trek in New York and ended up in San Francisco. "When you're out on your own for five months, you have a lot of time to be in your own head. I think there were a lot of old hurts and resentments and regrets rattling around in there, and I

finally had the time to kind of pick them up one by one and look at them, understand them and make peace with them."

Her goal was to raise money for the Navy SEAL Foundation, donated in the name of SEAL David Collins, and draw attention to the organization, which she ultimately did, collecting upwards of \$60,000. But what she didn't bargain for, was the mental battle she'd have to power through in order to come out the other side a stronger version of herself. "Lifting weights is hard. Running across the country is pretty tough, too," says the San Jose resident, who graduated college just a few weeks before embarking on the run. "But neither compare to the endurance ▶

RUNNING THE COUNTRY:
AN OUTTAKE FROM CHRISTINA'S
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it takes to face a world that tears you down constantly, and to meet it day after day with the phrase, *'I am enough.'*"

Prior to the run, Christina says she was a recreational athlete at best, having played soccer most of her youth, and eventually working her way up to her first marathon while in college. "I wasn't particularly fast, which always surprises people," says Christina. "They assume that someone who's running across America must be a natural born runner, but it's actually the complete opposite; everyone I know who has done it is really just a normal runner with a not-so-normal running goal."

Over the years, to family and friends, Christina had voiced her desire to make a cross-America run, although back then it was more of a "some day" scenario than anything else. But in June 2013, as she introduced herself on her first day of a new internship, she found herself saying to a room full of strangers: "Hi, my name is Christina, and a fun fact about me is that I'm planning to run across America next year." That changed

everything. "Mentally, it was the shift I needed to take the trip seriously," she says. A year later, she set off on the first day of her 150-day run, with nothing but the clothes on her back and a 70-lbs running stroller she aptly named Thor, loaded with food, a tent and supplies.

Her training was sufficient—hardly rigorous—as her plan was to conserve her body and

"LIFTING WEIGHTS IS HARD. RUNNING ACROSS THE COUNTRY IS PRETTY TOUGH, TOO. BUT NEITHER COMPARE TO THE ENDURANCE IT TAKES TO FACE A WORLD THAT TEARS YOU DOWN CONSTANTLY, AND TO MEET IT DAY AFTER DAY WITH THE PHRASE, I AM ENOUGH."

energy in the weeks leading up to the run. "The singular goal of my training was to get my body to the point that it wouldn't succumb to overuse injuries," says Christina, "so I tried to do as little training as possible in an effort to keep my body fresh, but still injury-proof."

For the most part, her plan worked, and she finished the cross-country journey on December 6 in San Francisco relatively unharmed (besides a minor tendon injury). But there were moments that were especially physically grueling, including entering Wyoming, where she encountered such strong headwinds, she thought her body, and mind, might give out. "I felt like a little toy sailboat being thrown around in a hurricane, cresting one wave and struggling to grab a quick breath of air before being thrown down into the trough of the next one," recalls Christina. "Physically, it was the most exhausting thing I've ever done, and mentally, it was the most taxing thing I'd ever experienced, so together it was just misery."

On the toughest days, Christina says that donations to the foundation, support via social media from friends, family and fans, and just the simple reality that she had made a public promise to finish the journey were enough to push her forward each day. "Committing purposefully was the hardest part, because it was scary to put myself out there," she says. "But after that, the mental part was pretty easy because it was exactly one thought I maintained unwaveringly: that I would do it. I never entertained any ideas about not finishing."

When all was said and done, Christina says she realized that she had run over 3,000 miles not only towards her goals, but towards the woman she had hoped to become. "I took those five months to practice some of the traits that I most admired in others. And I feel like now, when I do things, I do them with much more purpose. I'm still Christina, but I'm a much more conscientious version of myself, and I like it." **S**



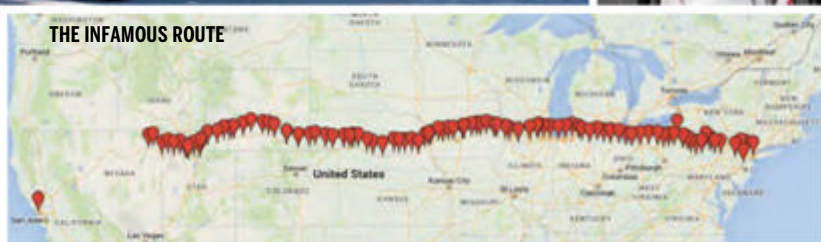
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IS YOUR
TRAINER
THE REAL
DEAL?



Hiring the Right Trainer

Use this checklist when hiring a CPT.

HIRING A TRAINER or coach can be one of the best investments you make. A good trainer can literally help you live longer, avoid injury, and realize goals you never thought possible.

However, a bad trainer can be a waste of money, pump your head full of nonsense, and even cause injury. A good trainer is worth her weight in gold, but how can you make sure you're getting what you pay for?

The first time I did a free trial session with a personal trainer, I worked harder in that one hour than I ever had on my own. It intrigued me. Exercise, to me, had always been pretty much the same: cardio first, then some

weight machines in a circuit; but a workout that involved barbells? Jumping? Speed ladders? I didn't know what that equipment was for the most part, but I also didn't have any way of knowing if my coach was an effective trainer or not.

Now that I've become a trainer myself, I've determined that the best trainers tend to share a list of common traits. Here are five criteria that can help you hire the right coach or trainer to get you to your goals:

1. THEY DO A THOROUGH ASSESSMENT.

You can't design a program for someone without knowing anything about that person. Good trainers will take you through an initial assessment process and ask detailed questions about your physical history including injuries, pregnancies, and aches and pains. They will put you through a baseline movement analysis, and determine the program best suited for you, based on your abilities and goals.

2. THEY HAVE A PLAN.

A fellow coach put it this way: "The client picks the goals, but the coach picks the methods." If you are hiring someone for their expertise, you have to trust in their plan. Trust is built over time, but initially they should give you a realistic idea of what it will take to reach your fitness or weight loss goals and explain the requirements. They should address your expectations clearly. A good trainer will be open about their methods and not claim to have a special "secret" to fitness that others don't. The only way to fat loss and muscle gain is through consistent, hard work.

3. THEY'VE DONE THEIR RESEARCH.

A good trainer bases the principles of their training on relevant scientific evidence and is able to back up their claims with appropriate research. They should also have knowledge of other credible experts to which they can refer you, should you require a massage therapist, physical therapist, or dietician in order to achieve your goals.

4. THEY'RE EXPERIENCED AND QUALIFIED.

This is a bit more of a delicate point, because not every trainer has formal degrees and a laundry list of titles after their name. Impressive qualifications aren't always indicative of an effective trainer, so look for a combination of education and the characteristics listed here. Look at who they work with (are their clients people like you?), what they write (many have online blogs, Facebook pages or personal websites) and ask about their background. A good trainer will never take offense to you doing your research.

5. THEY TAKE A HOLISTIC APPROACH.

The best trainers see more than just your body and know that the time you spend with them is only a small percentage of your life. They will go out of their way to educate you on everything that makes a difference to your health such as adequate sleep and relaxation, proper nutrition and allowing recovery from training. Hiring a trainer is like any other investment or large purchase—your best bet is to be an informed customer!

**In Strength,
Joy**



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRIS LINTON

“ I packed my meals, my suits, my clothes (and my husband) and made the trip from Australia to Canada to compete with the best natural fitness competitors in the world at the UFE World Championships. **I compete with UFE because I want to test myself against the best; I want to prove that I have the level of commitment that it takes; I want to prove...**

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Women To Watch

These four real women are changing the face of fitness.

WRITTEN BY SANDY BRAZ, DEPUTY EDITOR



Robyne Roveccio

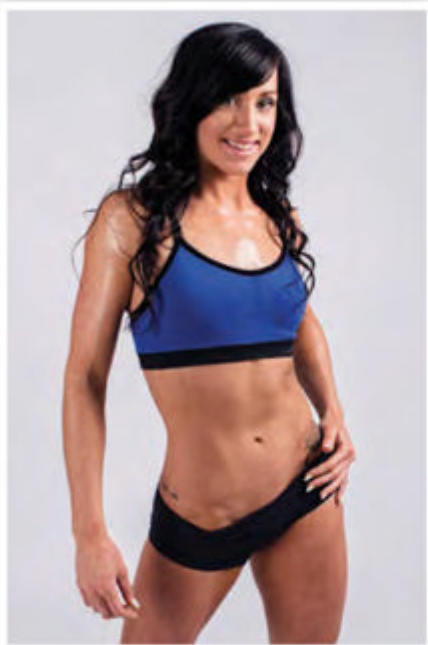
AGE: 50 **LOCATION:** SCOTTSDALE, AZ **GIG:** REALTOR **SPORT:** FIGURE

Fierce at 50: No matter how many times you've heard it, age really is just a number—and women like Robyne Roveccio are proving it every day.

A full-time realtor and Figure competitor, Robyne began bodybuilding in her mid-40s, eventually earning her IFBB Pro Card at age 48. And although her career demands a lot of commitment, she still makes time to train intensely up to five days a week with a mix of weights and cardio. Even though she had been active her whole life, including working as a fitness and yoga instructor at one point,

it wasn't until much later that she decided to change her outlook about getting older.

Today there's no question that she has an age-positive attitude and respects aging as a healthy process, however she admits that when she first started in the industry she was held back by her own limiting beliefs about age. "I thought I was too old and that my seven knee surgeries would prevent me from training to compete," says Robyne. "But I did a lot of personal growth and, at the age of 42, I set a goal to be on stage competing in Figure. I won my class and never looked back."



Megan Carroll

AGE: 24 **LOCATION:** NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR
GIG: PERSONAL TRAINER AND STUDENT
SPORT: POWERLIFTING/BIKINI

Brains and Brawn: Megan was once a very shy young woman, but that all changed about a year and a half ago, when she moved away from home to pursue post-secondary education and joined a local gym.

Shortly after starting to work with a personal trainer in 2013, Megan got involved in two very different competitive worlds: powerlifting and Bikini. She placed third in the Bikini category in her first competition, and this spring she'll compete at the National Championships in powerlifting, with hopes for a title. "Fitness has changed me dramatically," says Megan, who was an award-winning volleyball player in high school, but didn't really come into her own until she started weight training. "It has been my pillar of strength on so many occasions, pulling me out of the crippling grip of shyness. In the process of finding myself, I found what I truly love to do."



To flip like this, you need strong legs, power and a solid core.

Janine Biagi

AGE: 21 **LOCATION:** HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA
GIG: STUDENT **SPORT:** TRAMPOLINE

Goal Getter: At age 12, Janine started competing in trampoline with a goal of eventually taking her passion all the way to the national level, which she did. She recently placed second at Nationals and third in the Canada Cup, and last year she took her skills internationally, competing in Portugal and placing eleventh, a huge feat for her first competition overseas. "Power, strong legs and core are needed to execute skills on the trampoline," says Janine, who trains up to 20 hours

per week on the trampoline alone. "My program also includes heavy weight lifting (squats, lunges, deadlifts) as well as Olympic power lifting and plyometrics."

In the future, Janine says she'd love to compete in powerlifting and continues to lift regularly to make that goal a reality. For now, however, she's focused on her current sport and completing her degree in neuroscience, with big dreams of eventually beginning a career in sports physiotherapy.

Shanda DiAntonio

AGE: 33 **LOCATION:** ALBUQUERQUE, NM
GIG: PEDIATRIC ONCOLOGY NURSE **SPORT:** FIGURE

Strong Mom: In late 2012, Shanda gave birth to her second child and found herself saddled with a 70 lb weight gain. Depressed and unhappy with her mood and body image, she committed to working out in the gym (something she's done most of her adult life) and was inspired to compete when her trainer suggested she give it a go. Ten months later, she was competing in Figure at the Southwest Musclemania show, placing first in Figure Novice and third in Figure Open. A few months down the road, she was at Fitness America competing once again, rocking another first-place finish and earning her Pro Card.

Her next goal: training for and entering the Fitness category, which includes flips, jumps, tumbles and one-arm push-ups—the ultimate physical challenge for stage competitors. "To me, being fit is about more than just looking good," says Shanda, who ends each workout with 30-40 abdominal crunches on a kickboxing bag. "It's about being a good role model for my kids and loving myself enough to take care of the body that I have."

To Shanda, being fit is about more than just looking good.



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PHOTOGRAPHY PAUL BUCETA SHOT ON LOCATION AT MISSION FITNESS



NICHELLE LAUS TAKING THE CAMPERS THROUGH A GRUELING WORKOUT.



Top 8 Ways to De-Clutter

According to the site clean-thinking.com, here are eight simple steps you can take towards making your home a clutter-free haven:

1. GET RID OF THE JUNK.

Donate clothes, toys and even old gym gear to charity. Be ruthless and get rid of everything you don't need or haven't used over the year.

2. KEEP IT SIMPLE. Instead of wasting time figuring out what to clean with which product, buy one or two multipurpose cleaning solutions that you can use for most things.

3. DRAW A MAP. To get an overview of what needs to be done, draw a simple floor plan of your home and write down the tasks for each room.

4. FOCUS ON DISASTER AREAS.

If you don't have time to clean every corner of the house, focus on the busiest or messiest areas and do a good job there, instead of a half-hearted approach to the whole house.

5. DON'T CRAM EVERYTHING INTO ONE DAY. Break it down into several weekend chunks instead of trying to overdo it in an afternoon. It's less overwhelming.

6. PAINT THAT WALL. Since you're likely moving around furniture anyway, this might be a good time to finally repaint chipped walls. Choose a light color to give the room a fresh feeling.

7. FRAME THOSE PHOTOS. Take this off your to-do list! Finally print all of those digital photos and give your home a personal look and feel.

8. DO A QUICK SPRING MAKEOVER. Create a fresh mood with new fabrics or table linens and curtains, change the bedding, etc. Keep the look in line with the new season.

3 DIY CLEANING PRODUCTS

- Baking Soda
- White Vinegar
- Essential oils (lavender, lemongrass, etc)

Get it Together

Everything you need to get a jump on spring cleaning.

BEST APPS FOR KEEPING TRACK

A LITTLE HELP FROM YOUR DEVICE TO GET A HANDLE ON YOUR LIFE.

1. Remember the Milk: This free iPhone app brings your "To-Do" list to life. Features include tasks, actions, search, notes, locations, keys and reminders. **Free.**

2. iTimeSheetLite: For all the entrepreneurs out there, this app allows you to record activities and keep

track of the amount of time spent on each, making billing clients a breeze. Lite version is free, or upgrade to the full program for **\$5.99.**

3. Jefit: Allows you to track your workouts and vital stats. Simple enough for beginners, but also accommodates advanced fitness buffs. **Free.**

4. Fitocracy Macros: This app is genius. It tracks your food and tells you what you've consumed (fiber, water, protein, etc) via a built-in nutritional database, and allows you to backup data. **Free.**

WE ASKED YOU...

What's the number one way to feel more organized?

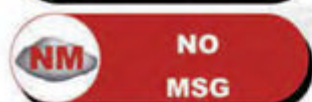
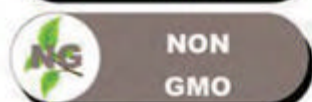
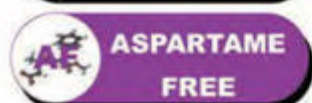
- 40% - Reorganize my kitchen
- 38% - Get rid of old clothes
- 12% - Clean out my car
- 5% - Clean out my gym bag
- 5% - Overhaul my computer files

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